



RICE UNIVERSITY

ROSA MAYREDER AND A CASE OF "AUSTRIAN FATE": THE EFFECTS OF
REPPRESSED HUMANISM AND DELAYED ENLIGHTENMENT ON WOMEN'S WRITING
AND FEMINIST THOUGHT IN FIN-DE-SIECLE VIENNA

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ABSTRACT

Rosa Mayreder and a Case of "Austrian Fate":
The Effects of Repressed Humanism and Delayed
Enlightenment on Women's Writing and Feminist
Thought in Fin-de-siècle Vienna

by Kay Lewis Mittnik

Despite increased interest in turn-of-the-century Austrian literature, women writers of the period have suffered the classic "Austrian fate": their works remain unrecognized. Yet a comparison of both the fiction and non-fiction by women of Vienna's Fin de siècle uncovers parallels between these works and those of eighteenth-century women. These parallels provide insight into the discrepancies between a woman's public and her private self-image in the age of male liberal humanism since the Enlightenment. Rosa Mayreder's non-fiction projects progressive ideals which are compromised in the fiction where the protagonists assume roles created for them by Western patriarchal society. Closer examination shows that women of the eighteenth century also compensated and compromised their positions in order to secure a reading public. Rosa

Mayreder's utopian vision of a reformed patriarchal ideology (non-fiction) gives way to resignation in the fictional works. But where the modernists endeavor to sustain the ideals of humanistic thought even under historic conditions that prevent its realization outside the spheres of art, Rosa Mayreder does not bow to the psychology of repression or to the relentless sexism of patriarchal society. She reconciles her revolutionary feminist thought with narrative forms to which women have traditionally had access. But she attacks nineteenth century institutions associated with the patriarchal oppression of Viennese society. And her female protagonists, who neither preserve their sanity through cold and brilliant intellectualism nor balance their feminine hysteria against the dictated images of a symbolic order in which they no longer believe, are among the first who defy the exaltation of womanhood through the internalization of male humanist standards.

Eighteenth century bourgeois patriarchy's predilection for liberal humanism, much like that of the late nineteenth century in Austria, lent ammunition to the growing feminist movement and to the rebirth of women's literary endeavors. It was not by chance that these endeavors were met by an onslaught of patriarchal constructions and male stereotyped images of women. By

not "saving" her protagonists from resignation and despair, Mayreder forfeited her rank in the literary canon. But she should be recognized as one of the first woman writers of this century to make visible progress toward the deconstruction of stereotyped images of women.

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PREFACE

It was in the year 1972 that William M. Johnston's monumental work on Austrian social and intellectual history was published. Almost overnight there came an upsurge of interest in all spheres of art and culture surrounding Vienna of the late nineteenth century. Johnston's scholarly undertaking was followed by numerous others, most of which were written with the same purpose in mind: the revival of the intellectual and cultural inheritance of the now obsolete Austro-Hungarian Empire, an inheritance whose expression in the visual arts had been awakening from a deep, half-century slumber for some years.¹

But if Viennese Secessionist art had been one of the main attractions of Austria's capital city for over two decades,² its popularity was nothing in comparison

¹ See William M. Johnston, The Austrian Mind: An Intellectual and Social History 1848-1938 (Berkeley: University of California, 1972); Carl E. Schorske, Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture, (1961; New York: Random House, 1981); Roger Bauer, ed., Fin de Siècle: Zu Literatur und Kunst der Jahrhundertwende (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1977); Allan Janik and Stephan Toulmin, Wittgenstein's Vienna (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973); Jens Malte Fischer, Fin de Siècle: Kommentar zu einer Epoche (Munich: Winkler, 1978); Manfred Diersch, Empiriokritizismus und Impressionismus: Über Beziehungen zwischen Philosophie, Ästhetik und Literatur um 1900 in Wien (East Berlin: Springer, 1973); Hans Hinterhäuser, Fin de Siècle: Gestalten und Mythen (Munich: Fink, 1977).

² See Schorske; also Peter Vergo, Art in Vienna

to that of the "Traum und Wirklichkeit" exhibition, an extravagant display of Viennese culture of the period 1870 to 1930, which the city hosted for several months of the year 1985. Due to popular demand "Traum und Wirklichkeit" was subsequently loaned out to New York City, where hundreds of thousands of those who had missed the exhibition in Vienna could file past the display cases and marvel at Austrian artifacts from the time before the great apocalypse that had brought the Austrian Monarchy to an end: World War I.³

Increasingly, scholars have written on topics unearthed from the archives of the period, works that range from biographies and social histories to art manuals and philosophical treatises. Literature of the epoch, categorized by historians under the heading of "Viennese Modernism,"⁴ has also come into demand on the

1898-1918: Klimt, Kokoschka, Schiele and their Contemporaries (London: Phaidon, 1975).

³ See the exhibition catalogue of the Traum und Wirklichkeit exhibition, ed. Hans Hollein. Also the magazine Architectural Digest, vol.55, no. 11/12.

⁴ See the essay by Hermann Bahr, "Die Moderne," first published in a collection, Zur Kritik der Moderne. Gesammelte Aufsätze, 1891. Also: Die Überwindung des Naturalismus, 1891; Studien zur Kritik der Moderne, 1894. Bahr is considered the organizer of "Die Wiener Moderne." His role as initiator is outlined in the introduction of Die Wiener Moderne: Literatur, Kunst und Musik zwischen 1890 und 1910, G o t t h a r t Wunberg, ed. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981) 11-79.

market and has not escaped commentaries by major literary critics and cultural analysts, among whom are Jens Malte Fischer and Roger Bauer. Testimonies to the phenomenon "Vienna 1900" abound and have appeared on stage, in display cases, book-racks and on gallery walls for the last twenty years.

Given the comprehensive nature of this Austrian "happening" of the past two decades, it might seem difficult to choose one particular underlying theme, motif or motivation present in the multitude of books, exhibition catalogues, and documentaries on the period. However, this is not the case. Most scholars of the era, regardless of their specific fields, would readily agree that the theme of Eros and the battle between the sexes imposed in part by the late nineteenth century repression of women, together with the Viennese socio-sexual context represented by figures such as Sigmund Freud, Otto Weininger, and Karl Kraus, have established an unchallenged position of prominence in the various realms of rediscovery and revitalization.⁵ Some of the

⁵ Relevant studies include: Horst Glaser, "Arthur Schnitzler und Frank Wedekind: Der doppelköpfige Sexus," in: Wollüstige Phantasie: Sexualästhetik der Literatur, ed. Horst Glaser (Munich: Metzler, 1974) 148-184; Hermann Glaser, Sigmund Freuds zwanzigstes Jahrhundert: Seelenbilder einer Epoche. Materialien und Analysen (Munich: Paragon, 1976); Nike Wagner, Geist und Geschlecht: Karl Kraus und die Erotik der Wiener Moderne (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982); Jacques Le Rider and Norbert Leser, eds., Otto Weininger: Werk und Wirkung (Vienna: Böhlau, 1984); Michael Worbs, Nerven-

more recently published studies--those of Nike Wagner and Michael Worbs, for example--deal extensively with the themes of sexuality, gender roles and sex characterization prevalent during the period.

Whatever the general focus, it seems that very little material even remotely connected with the culture of Fin-de-siècle Vienna has escaped documentation. The fears that the contemporary philosopher Emil Reich had expressed a decade before the turn-of-the-century--that the young writers of the period would never receive the recognition they deserved--appear in retrospect wholly unfounded.⁶ Many of the young Fin-de-siècle writers, however, would suffer the "Austrian fate" of their predecessors Adalbert Stifter and Franz Grillparzer, whose works would not become part of the literary canon until long after their deaths.⁷ Ironi-

kunst: Literatur und Psychoanalyse im Wien der Jahrhundertwende (Frankfurt: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1983).

⁶ Wunberg quotes an article: "Die deutsch-österreichischen Dichter und die Grillparzer-Gesellschaft," Neue Wiener Bücher-Zeitung, vol.1, no.2, Dec.15, 1890, p.3. The article is anonymous, but probably written by the editor A. Bauer. Reich expresses these fears: "In der Brünner Modernen Dichtung hat der Naturalismus sich ein kräftig aufstrebendes Organ geschaffen. Kurzum es fehlt uns nicht an Talenten, aber es fehlt unseren Talenten an Beachtung."

⁷ Two examples: Leopold Andrian, Der Garten der Erkenntnisse; Richard Beer-Hofmann, Der Tod Georgs.

cally, their homeland Austria would be the last to honor them.

Correlatively, one thing that those scholars and analysts who have dealt with the period have failed to communicate or have not considered worth their energy is the discrepancy between the abundance of female imagery (indeed, the period is unthinkable without it) and the void of writings by women. They have either totally neglected women's literary contributions, or have referred exclusively to those works by women on topics such as the women's movement and the "woman problem"--writings that have served the alibi function of appeasing critics of the "feminist approach" for decades.⁸ Yet nowhere is there a general full-length study of a Viennese woman's fictional and non-fictional writings, much less such a work on the topic of "Geist und Geschlecht." It is as if the turn-of-the-century taboo on female sexual experience--a taboo supported in the visual arts by the notion and portrayal of weak,

⁸ William Johnston entitles a three-page subchapter "Rosa Mayreder: Connoisseur of Woman's Role." Bertha von Suttner, the Nobel Peace Prize winner of 1905, receives just over two pages of glowing praise. Roger Bauer's work of 1977 does not include a contribution on women's writings. Jens Malte Fischer alludes to Bertha von Zuckerandl's many telephone conversations with notorieties of the period and to the fact that she prided herself her life long for having introduced Alma Mahler to Schindler. Mayreder and Suttner are not mentioned in Fischer's work.

passive women in the submissive, prone or death positions⁹--had been projected onto late twentieth century feminist literary criticism, which, despite its expansion of the literary canon to include writings by women, has not been successful at rallying strength and raising itself from the tubercular bed of roses it enjoys.¹⁰ Recalling Michael Foucault's theories on the incited discourse of sexuality, one might be further tempted to compare modern feminist discourse to the inverted power mechanisms the western world has conjured up since the Enlightenment.¹¹ Whatever goals it

⁹ Bram Dijkstra, Idols of Perversity (New York: Oxford, 1986) 3-83. The first three chapters, "Raptures of Submission: the Shopkeeper's Soul Keeper and the Cult of the Household Nun," "The Cult of Invalidism; Ophelia und Folly; Dead Ladies and the Fetish of Sleep," and "The Collapsing Woman: Solitary Vice and Restful Detumescence," deal exclusively with the nineteenth century images of women in the visual arts and in some literature of the period.

¹⁰ Dijkstra 36. Here Dijkstra refers to Daphne Du Maurier's Trilby, in which he sees the "apotheosis of an ideal of feminine passivity and helplessness whose tubercular or anorexic presence is still with us." He also quotes Charlotte Perkins Gilman's book, The Yellow Wallpaper, in which Gilman "was to demonstrate the immediate link which existed between the male creation of (and many women's compliance with) the principles of invalidism, the physicians' encouragement of that cult, and the increasing incidence of madness in women." Charlotte Perkins Gilman, The Yellow Wallpaper (Old Westbury: The Feminine Press, 1973). See also: Elaine Showalter, The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980 (1985; New York: Penguin, 1987).

¹¹ Michael Foucault, The History of Sexuality, trans. Robert Huxley (New York: Pantheon, 1978). Foucault's thesis: "A first survey...seems to indicate

may have attained, feminist discourse concerning the writings of women in Austria of the late nineteenth century has not yet convinced literary scholars of the importance of including such works in their publications. A seven-hundred-page anthology of Viennese modernist writings with scarcely a sample of discursive works by women and no mention of their belles lettres attests to this fact.¹²

With the writings of women left to decay in the archives of city libraries, modern literary critics have not availed themselves of opportunities to raise

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that since the end of the sixteenth century, the 'putting into discourse of sex,' far from undergoing a process of restriction, on the contrary has been subjected to a mechanism of increasing incitement; that the techniques of power exercised over sex have not obeyed a principle of rigorous selection, but rather one of dissemination and implantation of polymorphous sexualities; and that the will to knowledge has not come to a halt in the face of a taboo that must not be lifted, but has persisted in constituting...a science of sexuality" (12-13). This control of sexuality that began roughly in the eighteenth century is a major premise of Silvia Bovenschen's thesis (see footnote 14 of the preface).

¹² Gotthart Wunberg, ed. Die Wiener Moderne. Wunberg's "comprehensive" collection of reviews, essays, and excerpts from works of the period, along with extensive notes, has been invaluable in writing this thesis, since many of the works would not otherwise be accessible. There are critical essays by three women (Zuckerhandl, Elsa Bienenfeld and Marie Herzfeld), but no mention of women's creative writings. Many of the works cited in this thesis are reproduced, at least in part, in this collection.

the question of the discrepancy between the large number of women written about (the images abounding in the works of men of the period) and the practically non-existent images of women produced by women themselves. Scholarly works of the last fifteen years that have uncovered countless renditions of "das süße Mädel," "la femme fragile," the fairy princess and countless other helpless creatures (not to mention the unleashing of that greatly feared counterpart, "la femme fatale") have not inspired the feminist version of Nike Wagner's study of Karl Kraus, at least not from the perspective of a woman-writer. Despite the fact that the whole mood of Fin-de-siècle Vienna is set by the portrayal of women, the writings of women and their images of themselves have not been taken into consideration. In this way the women writers of the period have suffered a far more severe "Austrian fate" than many of their male cohorts.

This neglect of the writings of women and the resulting void of images created by women themselves are shown in the present study against the backdrop of what has become known as the erotomaniac era of the Viennese Fin-de-siècle. The search for answers to questions pertaining not only to the relationship between men and women, but also to the portrayal of women in the works of both men and women has led recent

researchers to the discovery of a treasury of yet untouched materials and discarded themes and has broadened interests in the field of Women's Studies with respect to Fin-de-siècle Vienna. This new interest inspires far more than a meager recounting of the images of women in turn-of-the-century literature, though such descriptive efforts have certainly provided background information for further studies from a feminist perspective. Though a simple comparison of the images created by men to those conceived by women themselves has been the scope of many critical works to be examined in the following pages, the present study will endeavor to go beyond a mere description of categories relative to the sex of the writer.

By leaving the categorization of images behind and more closely examining the writings of women for narrative devices, structural elements and linguistic strategies, yet another characteristic of women's literary imagery is uncovered. Close scrutiny of the oeuvres of several leading women-writers of the time--among them Rosa Mayreder, Grete Meisel-Hess, Irma von Troll-Borostyani, to name only a few--indicates that the images within the works of a single woman-writer, depending on the author's mode of writing (fiction or non-fiction), are often significantly different. These "discrepancies" (if they can be considered such) become

apparent when the discursive writings and the belles lettres are compared. The question remains, whether or not such differences can be held responsible for the fact that women's works have been left buried in archives to collect dust. Perhaps it is more reasonable to conclude that a close examination of these differences would shed new light not only on the essence and nature of women's writing, but also on the roles that women were asked to play within the context of Viennese society. The stereotyped, fixed roles of women depicted by men of Fin-de-siècle Vienna cannot be assessed in their influence upon the lives of women until the works of women themselves have been brought to light--and too often, as the present study will try to show, not even then.

With the "Zeitgeist" of Fin-de-siècle Vienna as a backdrop for this study of a woman's portrayal of womanhood, it is important to understand the traits and distinctions of a period so contrary to tradition that it has been referred to as an epoch of "therapeutic nihilism".¹³ One of the basic characteristics of

¹³ Johnston 223. "Throughout this book therapeutic nihilism has been mentioned as characteristic of Viennese life. Otto Weininger, Richard Wahle, Karl Kraus, and Ludwig Wittgenstein embodied the conviction that diseases of society or language defy curing. Outspoken opponents of this refusal to propose solutions include Bertha von Suttner, Rosa Mayreder, Josef Popper-Lynkeus, Theodore Herzl, and Otto Neurath. Although the concept of therapeutic nihilism has been

essayistic works written by women is the lack of nihilistic tone so predominant in the works of most men of this period. Women often succeed in creating new ideological values and merits that are largely non-existent in the writings of men. The fact (as I intend to show) that a woman would create different images of herself in fictional as compared to non-fictional works has little to do with any value judgement; that is, it does not question the ability of a woman of the period to produce high quality literary works with realistic images of her own sex. On the contrary, such a fact suggests that women on the literary scene in turn-of-the-century Vienna were, on one hand, simply not versed in the methodologies and intricacies of academically and scientifically run institutions, which meant, of course, that their frame of reference in relation to practical aspects of the profession was nothing like that of their masculine cohorts. It seems that women, further removed from the external and public pressures of Viennese society, were much more critical of their own situation when viewing it from a discursive mode than they were apt to express in their belles lettres.

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applied to philosophers and social thinkers, the term is a medical one, having risen during the nineteenth century in the Medical Faculty at Vienna."

On the other hand, they were certainly aware of their reading public and the expectations they were to fulfill in order to have their writings published.

The question at hand, therefore, is only indirectly related to whether or not the intellectual woman of a progressive elitist background--in this case, Rosa Mayreder--had to withstand the same ideological pressures of repression as her male fellow. Rather we will be dealing with an interpretation of the different dialectic methods which were present in the literary works of one woman writer. Whether or not there was voluntary integration or identification with the reigning order of society, especially where eros and sexuality are concerned, must be determined from the individual level of awareness as reflected in both her discursive and fictional modes. On one hand, the women portrayed--in Mayreder's fictional works as well as in the writings of men in the period--are unquestionably idealized and categorized as the "elegant," the "mondane," the sweet, childlike "süßes Mäderl," the "femme fragile" or "nerveuse," the fairy princess or the sisterly madonna. On the other hand, it is precisely this same woman writer who is acutely aware of her social dilemma and, despite her social standing, is willing to fight not only for the principle of an erotically fulfilling life, but also for a new ideology

that will succeed in unmasking the repression of eros and the ensuing identification with asceticism as subtle but effective power mechanisms of modern socialization.

Thus, the main intention of this study is the discovery and interpretation of the relationship between the prevailing image of womanhood and woman's concept of herself in Fin-de-siècle Vienna. Yet the mere establishment of those referential points within this relationship that serve to outline and explain the varying images in the writings of a woman of the period will not provide the study with the perspective necessary to draw conclusions on the changing roles women play in Western society--a society whose patriarchal orientation has accomplished miraculous feats of camouflage in order to avoid reflection and confrontation on such issues. How, then, does one add the needed perspective to such a study? The answer to this question can be found within the primary thesis of Silvia Bovenschen's 1979 book on the various representational forms of womanhood, Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit.¹⁴ Bovenschen's theory, based on examples since the seven-

¹⁴ Silvia Bovenschen, Die imaginierte Weiblichkeit: Exemplarische Untersuchungen zu kulturgeschichtlichen und literarischen Präsentationsformen des Weiblichen (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979).

teenth century, is that western patriarchal thought has created a range of artificial women who have served certain functions and provided far-reaching effects that have had little or nothing to do with real women. Furthermore, Bovenschen contends that the preserved images of womanhood have hidden the real historical and sociological presence of women since the Middle Ages, resulting in a "history of silence." Bovenschen sets up a systematization of the way women have appeared in western culture since the Enlightenment and documents these images with conceptual and metaphorical examples taken from cultural philosophy and literature. These examples are then examined according to the conditions under which they originated and according to their aesthetic evolution. Bovenschen begins her examination with the historical point at which the development of bourgeoisie aesthetics, i.e. autonomous aesthetic production, begins. This commencement happens to coincide with the origin of anthropological projections, which attempt to mix definitions of sex characterization and aestheticism as a way of legitimizing given images. The established traits of what was considered "womanly" then serve to build paradigms for the examination of bourgeois culture of the eighteenth century.

Bovenschen's work is one of the first comprehensive and full-scale studies on the evolution of

the images of womanhood in critical German literature.¹⁵ It is most valuable in its allusions to the diametrical opposition of the vastness of material written about women to the utter void of historical data about actual women, though the scope of the work does not allow a full study of this opposition. It has been most influential in determining the boundaries of the present study, which will examine the relationship between the repertoire of images and the shadowed existence of real women at the turn-of-the-century in Vienna. Bovenschen's study provides the necessary background for a historical perspective on the changing roles of women and their image in Western thought since the Enlightenment. Its method of comparison, when applied to the images found in the literature of late nineteenth century Vienna, will uncover the surprising set of standards in Austrian culture and socialization that governed the strategies, methods and means surrounding the portrayal of women in the works of men and women alike.

There is yet another interesting aspect, which has in recent years shed new light on the role of women and

¹⁵ See also Renate Möhrmann, Die andere Frau. Emancipationsansätze deutscher Schriftstellerinnen im Vorfeld der Achtundvierziger-Revolution (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977).

their images in Fin-de-siècle Vienna--the concept of delayed Enlightenment thought in Austria.¹⁶ The repression of Enlightenment ideals throughout the nineteenth century, perpetrated by political and social developments peculiar to the Danube Monarchy and so typical of the "therapeutic nihilism" described by Johnston, were virtually overcome in the works of many women writers of the turn-of-the-century, whose beliefs in the value and rights of the individual and the ability of humankind to burst the chains of servitude and of intellectual mediocrity seemed to echo the bourgeois ideologies of the eighteenth century. Rosa Mayreder was such a woman. Her firm trust in the power of rational thought resounds in the language of her discursive works which emanate the peace and harmony that only firm resolve can produce.

Yet the harmony in Rosa Mayreder's life and thought did not exclude contradictions. Her creed of reform rather than revolution which found expression in

¹⁶ See Friedrich Stadler, "Spätaufklärung und Sozialdemokratie in Wien 1918-1938. Soziologisches und Ideologisches zur Spätaufklärung in Österreich," in: Aufbruch und Untergang. Österreichische Kultur zwischen 1918 und 1938, ed. Franz Kadrnoska (Wien: Europaverlag, 1981) 441-473; Paul P. Bernard, The Limits of Enlightenment: Joseph II and the Law (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1979); Hugo Hantsch, Die Geschichte Österreichs, vol.2 (Graz: Styria, 1962), in which the fourth book (p.325-546) is especially helpful in understanding the Austrian version of "Aufklärung."

the Viennese social reform movements at the turn of the century is a typical feature of late bourgeois ideological liberalism--a milieu, however, to which Mayreder in many ways took exception. This unusually independent woman, who continually fought against the social limitations imposed upon her by liberal ideology, was deeply influenced by Wagner and Nietzsche. As Harriet Anderson writes, Mayreder embraced "the darker 'Dionysian' elements in human organization" and denied "the hegemony of reason over the irrational and subjective,"¹⁷ a hegemony which the nineteenth century had so uniformly transformed into science and scientific institutions and whose repression of women became the bane of Mayreder's existence.

Despite the inconsistencies of imagery found in the works of Rosa Mayreder and her female contemporaries, the unrealistic nature of their representations of women cannot be reduced to a psychological problem. On the contrary, it is essential that the contradictions be localized and their functions within the socialization of late nineteenth century Austria unmasked. In connection with these variations, it has also become apparent that the tendency towards amal-

¹⁷ Harriet Jane Anderson, "Beyond a Critique of Femininity: The Thought of Rosa Mayreder (1858-1938)," diss., U of London, 1985, 47.

gamation of nineteenth century traditions and ideas, so characteristic of Mayreder's work, is indicative of the oscillation between utopianism and conservatism found in the works of many women writers to this day, who have yet to escape the prescribed modes and genres "suitable" for women's literary creation.¹⁸ It is precisely the exposure of the conscious (or unconscious) motivation hidden beneath certain inconsistencies, that will become the guideline of the present debate.

¹⁸ The most obvious of examples is the literary genre "drama," which traditionally has been reserved for male writers and only in recent years has been discovered by women.

Chapter 1

"Die Wiener Moderne:" Rosa Mayreder and the Theory of Modernism in Fin-de-siècle Vienna

Understanding Rosa Mayreder's emergence, position and importance in Fin-de-siècle Vienna is dependent upon a comprehensive understanding of the period. This chapter will examine the writers of the turn of the century and the attributes which constitute the "Jung Wiener" style, including its relationship to naturalism, its conflict with German thought of the era, and particularly its deep roots in the bourgeois humanistic tradition. A brief examination of the historical, social and economic factors leading up to the Fin de siècle will illuminate the circumstances that delayed Enlightenment thought in Austria and created the unique environment within which Mayreder developed as a woman writer and feminist.

"Die Überwindung des Naturalismus"

As an eighteen-year-old, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, child prodigy of the "Jung Wiener" group, wrote a review entitled "Eleonora Duse: Die Legende einer Wiener Woche," a tribute to the Italian actress who performed in the Carl-Theater for one week in the year

1892 and whose stunning rendition of Ibsen's Nora was to live in the hearts of the Viennese for years to come. Hofmannsthal writes of the actress:

Sie ist imstande, ihre Persönlichkeit scheinbar zu verwischen: aber die Natur läßt sich nicht verbergen. Die Duse wäre eine naturalistische Schauspielerin, denn ihre Individualität nimmt jede Form an; aber die Individualität, als Form unterdrückt, kehrt als Geist wieder, und so spielt die Duse nicht bloß die realistische Wirklichkeit, sondern sie spielt auch die Philosophie ihrer Rolle. Sie ist ganz Marguerite, ganz Fedora, ganz Nora, aber sie weiß mehr von Nora, als Nora von sich selbst weiß. Genau so wie Julien Sorel oder Hamlet. An diesen ist nirgends Unwahrheit als in dem Übermaß von Klarheit. Darin liegt der ganze Unterschied zwischen dem schaffenden Dichter und dem Naturalisten, der Wissenschaft von der menschlichen Seele treibt, als wie sie sich dem gemeinen Auge offenbart.¹

Hofmannsthal's depiction of the artistic accomplishments of this actress, regardless of his conscious intention, is the literary program of the "Wiener Moderne" in nuce, more explicitly stated in fact than in the program essay "Die Moderne" of the "Jung Wien" organizer and initiator Hermann Bahr. To be sure, the "Herr aus Linz"² cannot be denied the role of spiritual

¹ Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Eleonora Duse: Die Legende einer Wiener Woche," in: Die Wiener Moderne, ed. Gotthart Wunberg (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981) 624.

² Karl Kraus, "Die demolierte Literatur," Wunberg, 644f. The essay was first published in the literary magazine, Wiener Rundschau, November 15, 1896, and again January 1, 1897. Gesammelte Werke, ed. Heinrich Fischer, vol. 1-10 (Munich: Kösel, 1952-1963); vol.11ff (Munich: Langen/Müller, 1963ff).

father for many of the literary innovators of Fin-de-siècle Wien. Yet his program essay, unlike the unintended equation of Hofmannsthal's Duse review, remains as vague as the closing appeal of his pathos-filled sermon: "Wir haben kein anderes Gesetz als die Wahrheit, wie jeder sie empfindet."³

What Hofmannsthal succeeded in expressing at such an early age was not only the fact that the many literary forms of the Viennese Modernist period would never disguise their true origins in naturalism, but also the reality that the identity of the "Jung Wien" authors could be traced to the question of form and not of social statement, according to the reinterpretation by Bahr of Zola's "Une phrase bien faite est une bonne action."⁴ The "Jung Wiener," though they may have worked with the same tools as the naturalists, were not primarily interested in mimesis:

Aber was hier für Bahr zur Debatte stand, war nicht das Gesetz jener objektiven Wahrheit, jener Wahrhaftigkeit, die sich gegenüber der Realität der Außenwelt zu bewahren hatte,

³ Hermann Bahr, "Die Moderne," Wunberg 191.

⁴ Bahr, Selbstbildnis, 223. Quoted in Wunberg 47. Wunberg gives an account of Bahr's opinion, according to which the false interpretation of the French naturalists by the Germans had led to a type of social activism hardly intended by the French writers. This "discovery" by Bahr was equated with the "Überwindung des Naturalismus," at least the kind of naturalism the Germans had known. The question was now one of literary form and style, not of social activism.

sondern eine subjektive, eben eine "Wahrheit, wie jeder sie empfindet". Damit waren sogleich zwei Stichworte gegeben: die Relativierung objektiver Wahrheit zu einer subjektiven, und das Mittel zu solcher Relativierung und Subjektivierung, nämlich die "Empfindung".⁵

Bahr wanted a new literature that was based on total trust of the senses: "Nur den Sinnen wollen wir uns vertrauen, was sie verkündigen und befehlen."

Die Gefühle wollen wir suchen, in unserer Brust und in den Fremden, welche nur irgendwo seufzen, träumen oder schnauben, wollen sie in Retorten setzen, in Dampf gehitzt und wieder erkältet, mit anderen gebunden und vermischt, in ihre Gase zerkocht, wollen es anmerken, wie sie sind. Und wenn dann die Zeichen und Marken in den Gehirnen wandeln, sich begegnen und umarmen, zu Reihen gesellen und in Reihen verschlingen, wenn die in die Seelen getretene Wahrheit sich ins Seelische verwandelt, die seelische Sprache annimmt und deutliche Symbole schafft, wenn endlich alles Außen ganz Innen geworden und dieser neue Mensch ein vollkommenes Gleichnis der neuen Natur ist, wieder ein Ebenbild der Gottheit nach so langer Entstellung, diesen neuen Geist wollen wir dann aussagen, was er für Meinungen und Befehle hat.⁶

This was the new form of art, "Seelenkunst," which was to transform external existence into a reprint of inner feelings, interpreted by a language of the soul and represented by symbols of the new nature. The poetry of the young Hofmannsthal and of Leopold Andrian, as well as the early Anatol fragments of Schnitzler and

⁵ Wunberg, introduction, 33.

⁶ Bahr, "Die Moderne," Wunberg 190f.

the sketches by Peter Altenberg, clearly reflect the new emphasis on "Seelenleben."

Of all the "Jung Wiener," Hofmannsthal is perhaps the most critical of the scientific basis of naturalistic writing. He contends that naturalism--the same naturalism Bahr supposes to have already dethroned--"plays science with the human soul, as if it could manifest itself to the average onlooker."⁷ Surely Bahr's "modern" scientific metaphors in the essay "Die Moderne"--the testtube feelings "heated in steam, then cooled and mixed with others, afterwards boiled until they vaporize, then to be analyzed"--were evidence to the much younger Hofmannsthal that his "spiritual father" had not changed literary camps as swiftly as he might have liked. Indeed, Bahr recognized the great talent of the young Hofmannsthal. He conceded in an essay entitled "Loris" that Hofmannsthal's essayistic accomplishments surpassed his own:

In der Essayistik...ist das alle überragende und leuchtende Beispiel dieser monologisch-assoziativen Analytik der junge, 17- bis 20-jährige Hugo von Hofmannsthal, dessen außerordentliche Überlegenheit gerade auf diesem Gebiet der zwölf Jahre ältere Hermann Bahr neidlos anerkannt.⁸

⁷ See Duse review quoted above.

⁸ Wunberg 33. Wunberg refers here to the article "Loris," published in the journal Freie Bühne. See: Jugend in Wien. Literatur um 1900. Eine Ausstellung des Deutschen Literaturarchivs im Schiller-National Marbach, catalogue of the exhibition by Ludwig Greve and

Hofmannsthal clearly perceived the new art of the Viennese "Impressionists" as one steeped in the realistic and naturalistic traditions of the preceding century. His awareness of continuity indicates his belief in the universalism of humanistic thought and the need for modern society to preserve those morals and ideals which had produced the Enlightenment in Germany and maintained the standards for elitist bourgeois integrity on the whole--an attitude not unlike that of many of the bourgeois women writers of the period. Bahr, on the other hand, wanted to usher out whatever remnants of naturalism were left, which to some extent favored a denial of mainstream literary tradition. He considered the naturalist movement only a phase, a transition between the old art and the new: "Der Naturalismus ist entweder eine Pause zur Erholung der alten Kunst; oder er ist eine Pause zur Vorbereitung der neuen: jedenfalls ist er Zwischenakt."⁹

Hofmannsthal was aware of the indebtedness of the new art to the innovations of the "Zwischenakt". Yet

Werner Volke, no. 24 (Marbach: Schiller-Nationalmuseum, 1974) 119. Wunberg highly recommends this catalogue, above all, because it contains unpublished materials otherwise not available.

⁹ Bahr, "Die Überwindung des Naturalismus," Wunberg 202.

his conservative attitude towards the preservation of Enlightenment traditions did not render him insensitive to the trends in literary production. Early in his career his essays and literary prowess earned him the recognition of critics, impressionists and fellow symbolists.¹⁰ It was also Hofmannsthal who met with Ibsen in Vienna in 1891, the man "dem wir die Kraft zu manchem rühmlichen Entschluß, uns selber vom Anempfundenen zu befreien, dankten."¹¹ In his journal entry of the same day Hofmannsthal speaks of "uns Jungen in Wien," a definite indication of the fact that he thought of himself as part of the innovative group that surrounded Hermann Bahr and the "Caféhausliteraten" of the Viennese literary scene.

What, then, renders Hofmannsthal's tribute to Eleonore Duse such a powerful message with respect to the characteristics of Viennese Modernism? For Hofmannsthal the new art was based upon more than an "Umfunktionierung der historisch gegebenen und begründbaren Rivalität zwischen Österreich und Deutschland..., die zunächst eine politische war, die aber unter seinen

¹⁰ The early play Gestern, which received acclaim at its first reading in the "Café Griensteidl," is considered one of his greatest successes.

¹¹ Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Aufzeichnungen (Frankfurt: S. Fischer, 1959) 91. Quoted in Wunberg 40.

[Bahr's] Händen zu einer der Literatur und damit zugleich zu deren Stimulans wurde."¹² Naturalism had allowed this new art to take on any form, that is to say, any aspect of reality could now be the subject of artistic endeavors, which, when pressed into a form, would become a subjective expression, a philosophy of its own nature, not simply the depiction of external reality. The new literary piece would know more about itself than the mere medium in which it was depicted could ever recount. Those elements that seemed to elucidate would, in fact, be void of truth. The creative genius would not make a science of the human soul, as the naturalists had done, because the soul would never disclose itself to the mechanics of scientific institutionalism, "dem gemeinen Auge," that had claimed its right to dissect the human condition through scientific means.

The subjective expression characteristic of late nineteenth century Austria proved to be a major factor in the literary production of women. Like the period of "Empfindsamkeit" in Germany, which saw an immense increase in works by women on the literary market, Fin-de-siècle Vienna would produce some remarkable contributions by women, both in the fictional and non-

¹² Wunberg, introduction, 44.

fictional modes. The reason for this increase lies within what Bovenschen calls the "Feminisierung der Kultur," a reevaluation of feeling as a moral instance. In a critique of the period of "Empfindsamkeit," Marion Beaujean points out the advantages of this reevaluation for the literary production of women:

Mit der Entdeckung des Gefühls als gleichrangiger Eigenschaft neben dem Verstand kann die Frau mit ihren spezifischen Werten nun ebenfalls als gleichrangig anerkannt werden. Das "Genie der Seele" wird dem intellektuellen Genie gleichwertig; im Gefühlsbereich befindet sich die Frau in ihrer ureigensten Domäne - ja, mit wachsender Anerkennung der "Empfindlichkeit" erweist sie sich dem Manne gegenüber sogar als stärker!¹³

What Beaujean does not take into consideration is that the women writers of the late eighteenth century--women like Sophie von La Roche--would have to find a compromise in their own representations of women in order to adhere to the images that Western patriarchal thought had provided. This vast repertoire of images will be viewed in the present study as a significant factor in women's literary production, not only in the late eighteenth century, but also for women's fiction in Fin-de-siècle Vienna.

The undeniable correlation between the reevalua-

¹³ Marion Beaujean, "Das Bild des Frauenzimmers im Roman des 18. Jahrhunderts," in: Wolfenbüttler Studien zur Aufklärung, vol. III (Wolfenbüttel: Wolfenbüttler Studien, 1969) 19.

tion of feeling (that of both Fin-de-siècle Vienna and late eighteenth century Germany) and the increase in the literary production of women becomes a basis for the analogies to be drawn between the compromised images produced by women writers of both periods. This new "Empfindsamkeit," captured so clearly in the theoretical and belletristic writings of the most prominent of the "Jung Wiener," paved the way for women writers like Rosa Mayreder, who, though she often renounced the writing of her male cohorts, took advantage of their "Feminisierung der Kultur" to become one of the few women writers to be recognized in her own day.

"Zerziehung der Nervenstände"

Ironically, the creative genius of Fin de siècle was well enough equipped to dissect the "Nervenzustände" of Viennese society. Many of the authors and philosophers of the period were scientists. One of them, the physicist Ernst Mach, was considered by his fellow countryman Hermann Bahr to be the philosopher of Viennese impressionism. According to Mach, the physical and psychical world is composed of complexes of sensations, colors, feelings and memories, whereby the personality, the self, is reduced to a relatively stable complex of such sensations.¹⁴ With any distinc-

tion between reality and subjectivity thus rendered non-existent, the impressionist writer of the period was free to wander from empirical experience into the psyche and back again in an attempt to recreate the most sensitive impressions of even insignificant events and moods. Peter Altenberg, the "boheme" of the impressionists, was the most successful writer of the impressionistic sketch, a short form like many others popular in the period, in which the "nervöse Romantik," the "Mystik der Nerven"¹⁵ found its expression.

Altenberg, who wandered the streets of Vienna from one "Café" to the other looking for a cure for his "nervous disorder," kept many scientists in business but never had a profession in the sciences. However, the most famous author of the Viennese one-act play and the first to use interior monologue in his prose did.

¹⁴ Ernst Mach, physicist and philosopher, is best known for his works, Die Mechanik in ihrer Entwicklung (1883) and Beiträge zur Analyse der Empfindungen (1886). Mach's works received little attention in Austria before they had been recognized in Germany. But when Robert Musil gave up his position at the Technical University in Stuttgart to study philosophy and psychology at the Friedrich Wilhelm University, it was Ernst Mach's works that captured his interests. His dissertation: Beitrag zur Beurteilung der Lehren Machs (Berlin: Dissertationsverlag Carl Arnold, 1908).

¹⁵ Bahr, "Die Überwindung des Naturalismus," Wunberg 202.

Arthur Schnitzler was by his first profession neurologist, but he became the most popular and well-known writer of Viennese Modernism. Freud himself was quite impressed by Schnitzler's work,¹⁶ which depicts everyday life in the bourgeois setting of Vienna around the turn of the century, while very subtly revealing the destructive and inhuman conventions that had rendered it impotent.¹⁷

Of all the male Viennese Modernists perhaps Robert Musil is the least known, though his works have in recent years found much acclaim. He, too, was a scientist, an engineer who later completed a second course of studies in philosophy and mathematics and then went on to write one of the monumental novels of his time, Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften. Like Hofmannsthal, Musil was a man of profound education whose works show a thorough understanding of the European literary tradition, though he in no way attempted the same literary feats as the versatile Hofmannsthal. Perhaps his best known work is the short novel, Die Verwirrungen des

¹⁶ See Wunberg 651-653 for two of Freud's letters to Schnitzler. These letters are quoted in Footnote 25 of the present chapter.

¹⁷ Schnitzler's best known works of the earlier period: Liebelei, play in three acts (1895); Leutnant Gustl, novella (1900); Reigen, comedy (privately printed in 1900).

Zöglings Törless, which portrays the pubescent development of a young man during his years at a military boarding school, "eine kleine Station an der Strecke, welche nach Rußland führt."¹⁸ This work reflects, as do many others of the period, the "Mystik der Nerven" that Herman Bahr describes in his essay "Die Überwindung des Naturalismus:"

Ich glaube also, daß der Naturalismus überwunden werden wird durch eine nervöse Romantik; noch lieber möchte ich sagen: durch eine Mystik der Nerven. Dann freilich wäre der Naturalismus nicht bloß ein Korrektiv der philosophischen Verbindung. Er wäre dann geradezu die Entbindung der Moderne: Denn bloß in dieser dreißigjährigen Reibung der Seele am Wirklichen konnte der Virtuose im Nervösen werden.¹⁹

The professional careers of the above mentioned authors may be a coincidence. Surely their training in the scientific fields had a pronounced influence on their ability to observe the world around them and to record these observations with the sensitivity of finely tuned instruments. They were the products of a scientific world, a world which thought to educate them as the sons and daughters of the Enlightenment who would nurture the belief in ratio and the infallibility of scientific thought. Still, they had more in common

¹⁸ Robert Musil, Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törless (1906; Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1978) 7.

¹⁹ Bahr, "überwindung," Wunberg 202.

than their educational background. They were with few exceptions the sons and daughters of bourgeois households that provided them with financial and social standing more consistently similar than that of many other literary movements of such magnitude in the German-speaking world, with the exception of the Enlightenment. This fact, more than any other, proved significant for the declaration of autonomy that would shape their lives and the art they created.

Jews, Women, and the Austrian Bourgeoisie

Yet another, even more significant factor must be considered with regard to the origins of artists and literary figures of the Fin de siècle. Just after the turn of the century, the cultural center of Vienna had about two million inhabitants. In the year 1914, the Jewish citizens made up approximately nine percent of the population.²⁰ Jews were involved above all in the economic and cultural sectors, a fact which is confirmed by the large numbers of Jewish scholars, artists, writers and journalists. The motifs of political manipulation--undeniably an integral part of anti-semitism, but not generally of great consequence in the

²⁰ Viktor Zmegac, ed. Geschichte der deutschen Literatur vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart, vol.II-2 (Königstein: Athenäum, 1980) 12.

context of literary thematics of the period--are certainly present in the works of Arthur Schnitzler, who devoted an entire drama, several short prose pieces and numerous essays to the topic. Still, it is remarkable to note that the subordination of women and the struggle of women for their rights far outweighed the manipulation and repression of Jews as a literarily viable subject.²¹

In connection with the homogeneity of the "Jung Wiener" and their bourgeois social origins, one should bear in mind that the rise of the bourgeoisie in Austria was quite different from that in Germany, where industrialization was well under way by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The industrialization of Austria did not start until the middle of the nineteenth century, and when it finally did begin, the specific circumstances of the social and cultural upheavals there proved to be quite incongruent with those of Germany during the preceding one hundred years.²² Accordingly, the bourgeois authors of the

²¹ See F. L. Carsten, Faschismus in Österreich von Schönerer zu Hitler (Munich: Beck, 1977).

²² One of the fundamental differences in the development of the middle classes of the two nations was the alliance structure: whereas in Germany the newly emerging bourgeoisie formed its strongest connections with the lower classes in order to weaken the absolutists, the bourgeoisie of Austria was impotent against the alliance already formed by the aristocracy and the masses. Refer to the essay by Hermann Broch,

Fin-de-siècle were born into an entirely different class structure (one of specifically Austrian character that was wholly impotent in matters concerning the aristocracy) than that of their predecessors in late eighteenth century Germany. The Enlightenment authors, whose theories of aesthetics bore the mark of political and social developments of their time, gained immeasurable support from the scientific and cultural institutions of the Age of Reason. The late nineteenth century Austrian writers, however, based their innovations on what appeared to be purely aesthetic qualities, which bore little resemblance to the anti-absolutist strategies of a rising bourgeois class.

The situation of women in Austria was also quite different from that of German women. It is true that the revolutionary reforms of Joseph II had granted women of Austria certain rights not enjoyed by women in Germany (the right to manage their own property, the right to take up employment without the husband's consent, certain voting rights). But these rights were either not observed, or they were withdrawn by the increasingly conservative governments, especially after

—
"Die fröhliche Apokalypse Wiens um 1880," Wunberg 86, which is discussed at length throughout the first chapter, 24-51.

"Black Friday," the stock market crash of 1873, and the catastrophic elections of the same year, when the liberals lost much of their support.²³ The reactionary measures which followed, including the rejection of basic property rights in Lower Austria, led to the increased involvement of women in the political arena, especially those of bourgeois origins, like Marianne Hainisch, who was the organizer of the women's education movement.²⁴

Yet the women of Austria were still far behind the emancipation endeavors of their German neighbors. It was not possible to speak of a woman's movement in Austria until after 1848. Clearly, the same forces are at work here that produced, or repressed, the rise of the bourgeoisie in Austria. Without an emancipated middle class there could be no strength within the women's platform. In addition, the Biedermeier culture and its idealization of woman as mother and housekeeper

²³ See Erich Zöllner, Die Geschichte Österreichs: Von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1966). Also: Fred Hennings, Solange er lebt: Aus dem Wien der Jahrhundertwende, vol.1-5 (Wien: Herold, 1968).

²⁴ Marianne Hainisch (1839-1936) was the most influential organizer of the early mainstream Austrian women's movement. See Alma Motzko, "Marianne Hainisch," in: Frauenbilder aus Österreich, The League of Austrian Women's Associations (Vienna: Obelisk, 1955). Also: Erika Weinzierl, Emanzipation? Österreichische Frauen im 20. Jahrhundert (Wien: Böhlau, 1975) 145-149.

had held the development of an Austrian women's movement back half a century. Educational pursuits lagged; the first high school for girls was not founded until 1892 and women were not allowed to study at the university until 1900. And for those women who had managed to acquire an education, there was scarcely any tradition to call upon for inspiration. There had been no Sophie von la Roche, no Caroline von Schelling or Bettina von Arnim to pave the way for those who were inclined to pursue the advancement of women, whether inside or outside literary circles. And certainly the tea parties of Caroline Pichler in Vienna of 1800 were nothing to compare with those of Rahel Varnhagen's, which provided entertainment for the German literary figures through-out the romantic period--a movement which would not be felt in Austria until the turn of the next century, and then only indirectly.

Rosa Mayreder, born in the year 1858 into the educated bourgeois setting of the "K.u.K. Hauptstadt," showed no awareness of the fact that ten percent of the population of her home city was being persecuted for reasons of religious inheritance. But she spent all of her life in the same city that Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal and many of the other representatives of the Jewish cultural elite called home. She, too, watched the city of Vienna become a metropolis and cultural center with-

in a few decades. Throughout her life and works there are manifold parallels to the lives and works of her contemporaries, as a closer examination of her discursive and belletristic writings will show. Existentially (i.e. with respect to the popular belief that an alternative lifestyle was the only way of exposing the "Schein" of social convention), there are definite analogies in her life to the "cult-of-life" attitudes, which have been perceived by many critics as a common trait in the most diverse segments of Viennese art and literature of the period--analogies which persist despite the dissimilarities in artistic and literary form.

Though a comparison of the works of Mayreder and her contemporaries may reveal similarities in theme and genre, there was only one condition that the literary figures of the Fin de siècle could agree upon: that they would not agree upon anything. They were to a large extent withdrawn creators of vastly varied literary designs, functioning independent of one another within a society that was suffering from a terminal disease. It seemed almost an unwritten law that the inventors of aesthetic design should at all costs avoid correspondence or cooperation, as if common acknowledgement of the existing frailties might hasten the hour of reckoning. Like Hofmannsthal's Duse, these

writers were in their origins quite naturalistic and undeniably capable of using their individuality to conjure up the most diversified forms. What this consciousness of form could not sufficiently camouflage, however, were the symptoms of decay in the fading feudal state that had outlived its time for many decades. Ironically, the aestheticization of Viennese culture, a last attempt to retrieve the remnants of a medieval universalism, would not survive the last Kaiser.

Caféhäuser and the Cult of Outsiders

The cultivation of an elitist set of aesthetes, thus, became one of the few discernible common strategies among writers of the period. According to this strategy, any influence which posed a threat to the stability of the "outsider" existence was immediately subordinated to a regulative taboo. In other words, there appeared to be no desire on the part of the cultural and literary leaders of late nineteenth century Vienna to identify with their contemporaries, though the grounds for such identification were clearly visible. Yet "outsiderdom" was far more than an image perpetrated by the individual for aesthetic reasons. With art reduced to a commodity, the striving for innovation may have led some artists of the period to the outsider stance for protection from exploitation. The

most famous case of such repression--though in this case certainly for more personal reasons--involves a well-known member of the cultus, Sigmund Freud, whose unabashed anxiety towards his "Doppelgänger" Arthur Schnitzler and publicly courted discord with Karl Kraus constitute excellent examples of the phenomenon.²⁵

²⁵ See Wunberg 651-653. In a letter to Schnitzler of May 8, 1906, Freud states:

"Seit vielen Jahren bin ich mir der weitreichenden Übereinstimmung bewußt, die zwischen Ihren und meinen Auffassungen mancher psychologischer und erotischer [sic] Probleme besteht, und kürzlich habe ich ja den Mut gefunden, eine ausdrücklich hervorzuheben (Bruchstück einer Hysterie-analyse, 1905). Ich habe mich oft verwundert gefragt, woher Sie diese oder jene geheime Kenntnis nehmen konnten, die ich mir durch mühselige Erforschung des Objekts erworben, und endlich kam ich dazu, den Dichter zu beneiden, den ich sonst bewundert."

In a letter of May 14, 1922, Freud continues:

"Ich will Ihnen aber ein Geständnis ablegen, welches Sie gütigst aus Rücksicht für mich für sich behalten [und] mit keinem Freunde oder Fremden teilen wollen. Ich habe mich mit der Frage gequält, warum ich eigentlich in all diesen Jahren nie den Versuch gemacht habe, Ihren Verkehr aufzusuchen und ein Gespräch mit Ihnen zu führen (wobei natürlich nicht in Betracht gezogen wird, ob sie selbst eine solche Annäherung von mir gerne gesehen hätten).

Die Antwort auf diese Frage enthält das mir zu intim erscheinende Geständnis. Ich meine, ich habe Sie gemieden aus einer Art von Doppelgängerscheu. Nicht etwa, daß ich sonst so leicht geneigt wäre, mich mit einem anderen zu identifizieren oder daß ich mich über die Differenz der Begabung hinwegsetzen wollte, die mich von Ihnen trennt, sondern ich habe immer wieder, wenn ich mich in Ihre schönen Schöpfungen vertiefe, hinter deren poetischem Schein die nämlichen Vorraussetzungen, Interessen und Ergebnisse zu finden geglaubt, die mir als die eigenen bekannt waren. Ihr Determinismus wie Ihr Skepsis - was die Leute Pessimismus heißen - Ihr Ergriffensein von den Wahrheiten des Unbewußten, von der Triebnatur des Menschen, Ihre

The names linked to the "cult-of-life" syndrome of Vienna's Fin de siècle are traditionally those of men. But there were also women who cultivated the outsider existence. The major difference is that in choosing such a life-style these women became a minority within a minority.²⁶ From Rosa Mayreder's perspective, the cultivation of an outsider existence was more closely equated with a strong moral conviction and obligation to overcome conventional bias and limitations:

Meine geistige Entwicklung fällt in eine Zeit, in der die bürgerliche Familie noch völlig unter der Herrschaft unangetasteter Traditionen stand. Die Auflehnung dagegen

Zersetzung der kulturell-konventionellen Sicherheiten, das Haften Ihrer Gedanken an der Polarität von Lieben und Sterben, das alles berührte mich mit einer unheimlichen Vertrautheit... So habe ich den Eindruck gewonnen, daß Sie durch Intuition - eigentlich aber infolge feiner Selbstwahrnehmung - alles das wissen, was ich in mühseliger Arbeit an anderen Menschen aufgedeckt habe."

Michael Worbs' Nervenkunst offers insight into the relationships between Freud and the writers of Fin-de-siècle Vienna.

²⁶ See Hans Mayer, Outsiders, 21-28. In his chapter on "The Second Sex and its Outsiders," Mayer alludes to a linear development in the history of women's images, a negative development in which the portrayal of women in Western civilization has progressively become more stereotyped. He ends the chapter with this note: "The breakup of the Enlightenment, as far as the transformation of women into outsiders is concerned, in the remainder of the nineteenth and in the twentieth century, is consummated on three fronts: as a permanent reevaluation of the scandal of Joan of Arc; as a transformation of Judith into a middle class heroine; as the metamorphosis of Delilah into a vamp, a 'femme fatale,' the archetype of the seductress."

bildete im Bereich meines persönlichen Schicksals das entscheidende Erlebnis. Kraft meiner Wesensart dem alten Ideal der Weiblichkeit entgegengesetzt, aber zugleich durch die äußeren Umstände seinen Gesetzen ausgeliefert, nahm ich den Kampf gegen seine Übermacht als ein ganz isoliertes, ganz auf sich gestelltes Einzelwesen auf, ohne Anleitung von Außen, ohne Gemeinschaft mit Gleichgesinnten, aber dennoch in dem unbeirr- baren Bewußtsein, im Rechte zu sein.²⁷

Despite the fact, however, that some of the most prolific and well-known writers and artists of Vienna ascribed to the cult of the outsider, there existed a tolerated alternative to this "outsiderdom." The literary figures who did all but pitch their tents in the coffeehouses of Vienna seemed to thrive on the atmosphere they found there, and, apparently to spite the new taboos against exchange of any sort, found support systems in the circles of friends and relationships they nurtured within the confines of such places. Some of these circles, such as the ones associated with the names Bahr, Kraus and Altenberg, among numerous others, are largely responsible for setting the stage of Vienna's only literary debut; indeed, Fin de siècle would be virtually unthinkable without them.

Thus, the role the coffeehouse played in the development of Vienna's literary, artistic and intel-

²⁷ Rosa Mayreder, Das Haus in der Landskrongasse, ed. Käthe Braun Prager (Wien: Mensa, 1948) 152. In the following quoted as "HiL-page number."

lectual life is immense. The most famous of Vienna's "Caféhäuser" was the Café Griensteidl, whose significance is best portrayed by a contemporary, Alfred Zohner:

Niemals früher und niemals später, weder in Österreich noch in Deutschland, Frankreich oder Italien, hat sich Literatur- und Kulturleben inniger mit dem Kaffeehaus verschwistert als das "Jung Wien" mit dem "Café Griensteidl". Diese Verbundenheit geht so weit, daß man, ohne mißverständlich zu werden, einen Namen für den anderen setzen kann...Das Kaffeehaus als Hauptstapel- und Umschlagplatz von Zeitideen...gewinnt seine eigenartigste Erscheinungsform im "Café Griensteidl".²⁸

There were, however, writers in turn-of-the-century Vienna who did not frequent the Griensteidl or the Café Central. Rosa Mayreder, for one, seldom partook in the turbulent, late-night discussions in the smoke-filled rooms, where not only the younger generation congregated, but also the older writers of the "Iduna" held their weekly meetings.²⁹ Mayreder preferred instead to invite literary figures of the older

²⁸ Alfred Zohner, "Café Griensteidl," in: Geschichte der deutschen Literatur in Österreich-Ungarn im Zeitalter Franz Josephs I., ed. Eduard Castle, 4 vol., 1897ff, vol. 4, 1715f. Quoted in Wunberg 16-17.

²⁹ The members of the "Iduna" circle of Viennese writers rejected the innovations and theories surrounding the aestheticization of all cultural life. Two women writers, Emilie Mataja and Eugenie delle Grazie, were also members of this group. Rudolf Steiner was a founding member. The group dissolved in 1894.

generation (many of the above mentioned "Iduna" circle) to her own "Salon". Hanna Schnedl, editor of the collection of discursive writings published in 1981, writes in the introduction about the later "Salon" evenings in the Mayreder household:

Der spätbürgerliche Salon Mayreder ist nicht mehr durch künstlerischen und intellektuellen Dilettantismus geprägt wie noch die geselligen Samstagabende ihrer Kindheit und Jugend in der Landskronngasse, bei denen diskutiert und musiziert werden. Der Salon Rosa Mayreders ist in gewissen Kreisen der Intellegentia und Künstler in. Im Laufe der Zeit gehören unter anderem der Soziologe Rudolf Goldscheid, der Anthroposoph Rudolf Steiner und der Musiker Hugo Wolf zum Bekannten- und Freundeskreis des Hauses.³⁰

Rosa Mayreder was vehemently opposed to the "décadence" and "Dilettantismus" nurtured by the artistic and political bohemians who frequented the "hot-houses" of literary and cultural exchange.³¹ Despite the fact, however, that Mayreder in no way identified with such a life-style, there remain numerous parallels in her life that can be drawn to the lives of those who

³⁰ Introduction to Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit, ed. Hanna Schnedl (Munich: Frauenoffensive, 1981). This edition will be quoted in the text as "KdW-page number."

³¹ The metaphor is often used in connection with literature of the period. See: Roger Bauer, "Das Treibhaus oder der Garten des Bösen: Ursprung und Wandlung eines Motivs der Dekadenzliteratur," in: Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1979). See also Hermann Bahr, "Décadence und Dilettantismus," Wunberg 234-9.

did. For one, her non-committal attitude towards other figures of the literary world in Vienna is something she had in common with many representatives of Viennese Modernism. As we have seen, Viennese literary figures were in no way interested in a common program of aesthetics, nor were they intrigued by the thought of solidarity with a community of kindred souls, as was the case in the George circle. That did not keep them, however, from frequenting the coffeehouses of Vienna on a regular basis. Coffeehouses had become more than just a place to meet; they had come to signify the organization of the "disorganized," a "substitute totality" for a world that would otherwise be drawn into the "Wert-Vakuum" Hermann Broch had so often described.³² Another contemporary, Alfred Polgar, sums up the phenomenon in his feuilleton, "Die Theorie des Café Central:"

Das Wiener "Café Central" ist nämlich kein Kaffeehaus wie andere Kaffeehäuser, sondern eine Weltanschauung, und zwar eine, deren innerster Inhalt es ist, die Welt nicht anzuschauen....Das Café Central stellt also eine Art Organisation der Desorganisierten dar.³³

The "Caféhaus" as "Weltanschauung" provides us

³² Hermann Broch, "Die fröhliche Apokalypse Wiens um 1880," Wunberg 86.

³³ Alfred Polgar, "Theorie des Café Central," in: Der farbenvolle Untergang, ed. Harry Zohn (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1971) 24-25.

with an excellent example of the influence of the prevalent life-style upon Viennese impressionism: the height of the artistically sensual, subjective experience is born of a curious reduction of empirical and realistic encounters otherwise known as "Caféhausatmosphäre." This "Treibhausatmosphäre" on the literary scene, closely related to the general escape from reality apparent elsewhere in Europe, was a decisive factor in the rising popularity of the literary short-forms so prominent in the period: the one-act play, the novella, the impressionistic vignette, the feuilleton, and the essay. Despite the fact that Rosa Mayreder had little to do with the coffeehouses of Vienna, these short, less traditional forms also constitute the basis of her writings: they lend themselves to the associative mosaics, mood swings and psychoanalytic exposés of an "epoch of nerves" that mixed science and poetry and accepted psychiatry as a part of the literary canon.

Brevity and pointedness of expression are not the only similarities in the writings of Fin-de-siècle authors. There are parallels in writing styles that are likewise apparent. One of the most common stylistic traits found in Mayreder's novellas and novels is the dialogue, which often represented cultivated, refined conversation or discourse with intellectually directed and pointed statements. The dialogue was also

characteristic of the works of Mayreder's contemporaries, though what they often express in the form of expanded jokes and anecdotes, she more often brings in essay form. This mixing of genre components--the adaptation of elements like the dialogue, which is traditionally bound to the dramatic form, to the rules of epic structure--this amalgamation of literary components reflects the individualistic style of the "Caféhausliteraten" who frequented the locals of turn-of-the-century Vienna. Whatever the innovations in form and mode, they were at least greatly influenced by the Viennese coffeehouse atmosphere.

That Rosa Mayreder frequently expressed her disdain for the aestheticization which the coffeehouse literary giants had set out to foster did not make her more critical than some of the participants themselves. She must have felt much like Hugo von Hofmannsthal when he described Vienna to Beer-Hofmann in a letter of May 10, 1896: "Das Leben, das wir hier führen, ist nicht gut.... Wir leben in geistiger Beziehung wie die Cocoton, die nur französischen Salat und Gefrorenes essen." It may at first glance seem rather unusual to utter the name of such an anti-nostalgic writer and critic of patriarchy like Mayreder in the same breath with that of Arthur Schnitzler or Hugo von Hofmannsthal, but one soon recognizes the fact that the basic psychological

premise of her works--the processing of new knowledge in the field of psychoanalysis--also characterizes the writings and forms of a vast number of other artists of the Viennese Fin de siècle. It is more specifically a comparison of Mayreder to the very authors whose works she vehemently denounced which most clearly shows how intricately bound this Viennese woman-writer was to the turn-of-the-century culture from which she, according to her own account, had so spiritually extricated herself.

The coffeehouse, then, is perhaps not so much the birthplace as it is an incubator of the innovations Viennese literary figures had set out to create. Here the literary feats of the period were nourished in their embryonic stages by the exchange of information among peers and the raised hopes of drumming up some sort of publication opportunities, the kind that had never been plentiful and, to make matters worse, had been plagued by empirical censorship since the early nineteenth century. Publication possibilities, or the lack thereof, became yet another factor conducive of an adaptation to the demands of newspaper and journal editors, who were among the professionals most widely represented at the Griensteidl and who, as we shall later see, became most influential in the breeding of a Fin-de-siècle literary culture.

Nineteenth Century Philosophy and Art

To understand the need for self-identity within the context of their ties to a literary tradition is to better comprehend the endeavors of the Viennese Modernists to create something new, especially where naturalism was concerned. Bahr himself concedes that the differences between Modernists' artistic production and that of the preceding centuries lay not in the function of art, but instead within the definitions and limits of the reigning social order. The one exception could be found in the Modernists' view of (German) naturalism, of which they wanted no part.

Freilich: die alte Kunst will den Ausdruck des Menschen und die neue Kunst will den Ausdruck des Menschen; darin stimmen sie überein gegen den Naturalismus. Aber wenn der Klassizismus Mensch sagt, so meint er Vernunft und Gefühl; und wenn die Romantik Mensch sagt, so meint sie Leidenschaft und Sinne; und wenn die Moderne Mensch sagt, so meint sie Nerven. Da ist die Einigkeit schon wieder vorbei....

Man kann den Naturalismus als eine Besinnung des Idealismus auf die verlorenen Mittel betrachten.

Dem Idealismus war das Material der idealen Ausdrücke ausgegangen. Jetzt ist die nötige Sammlung und Zufuhr geschehen; es braucht bloß die alte Tradition wieder aufgenommen und fortgesetzt zu werden.³⁴

According to this diagnosis, naturalism had served as

³⁴ Bahr, "Überwindung," Wunberg 202.

an interim in which German Idealism had allowed itself needed rest and recuperation. Refurbished and polished, it had simply picked up (after the interim) where it had left off. In other words, the Modernists saw their break with European (and, indeed, with Austrian baroque) tradition as superficial at best. Creating something new had meant, in effect, distinguishing their work from that of the German naturalists.

Indeed, Austrians, nestled in deeply rooted baroque traditions, had always been somewhat ambivalent (if not negative) towards the cultural heritage of their German neighbors, at once dependent upon them for their advancement of the intellectual, cultural and social ideas of the Enlightenment, objecting at the same time to the Epoch of Reason that had demoted Christianity and brought about an unbridgeable separation of the world into a realm of those things transcendental and those things empirical. Nineteenth century Germany had known an entire array of philosophies and ideals that had not been prominent in Austria, from romanticism, positivism, materialism, naturalism and Darwinism to the anti-Enlightenment era of the so-called anti-Christ Nietzsche. It had also known the great opponent of these philosophies, the man who wanted to save Christianity, Sören Kierkegaard, a man whose battle,

however, would be lost to resignation and the ensuing escape "into" reality characteristic of late nineteenth century Europe. This denunciation of spirituality, which thwarted all endeavors to bridge the gap between the transcendental and positivistic views of Western thought, had already taken a firm hold, especially in Germany where the widespread escape into reality became a new kind of religion. On the other hand, technology and the polemics surrounding technological encroachment upon the individual's rights had become an excuse for the inner void.

Was there a positive solution to the dilemma? Nietzsche's "Zarathustra" proposed one: the cult of the superhuman, the ideal of a new age. As if in defiance of Darwin's "survival of the fittest," the "eternal recurrence" became the only evolutionary potential, which in turn meant the obliteration of all things traditional. Yet resignation remained rampant. Intellectualism, social indifference and cultural pessimism still ruled the day. Even Austria, whose last decades of the nineteenth century have traditionally been referred to as the "belle epoch," did not escape the ideological despondency of the period. Hermann Broch's essay, "Die fröhliche Apokalypse Wiens um 1880," describes the general atmosphere of the city of Vienna as a "Wert-Vakuum:"

Auch in Wien beherrschte das Wert-Vakuum die Jahre von 1870-1890, aber die waren hier eben die Backhendl- und nicht wie in Deutschland die Gründerzeit, und sie wurden daher so leicht genommen, wie es sich für ein Vakuum geziemt.³⁵

At the same time, it was precisely the "Zeitgeist" that produced Nietzsche's works which introduced a new spirit of vitality and rendered the concept of the irrational again popular. The pessimistic attitude toward technology began to change. Late nineteenth century European society no longer considered technology an enemy, as it had been defined by the early nineteenth century romanticists; nor was it held to be a dictator over life, such as the positivists were apt to believe. Instead, technology came to be viewed as an element of life that demands the maintenance of balance between the material (technical) and the intangible (intellectual) aspects of cultural existence. This balance, according to philosophers like Nietzsche and Max Scheler, could be attained through an extension of those things spiritual and intellectual, but without necessarily requiring the curbing of technology. Coupled with this new belief in the virtues of balance

³⁵ Wunberg 86. Hermann Broch, "Die fröhliche Apokalypse Wiens um 1880," in: Hofmannsthal und seine Zeit. See: Hermann Broch, Schriften zur Literaturkritik I: Kritik (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1975) 111-284 and 300-334.

was an ethical rejuvenation on the basis of Christian values of personal responsibility. A new type of humanism, a re-Enlightenment began to take shape.

Naturally, Austria's development reflected much of what was going on in the rest of Europe, as it, too, began to show signs of a re-Enlightenment phase. Thinkers and theologians of the "empire of many nations" endeavored to solve the problems of technology and its effects on intellectual life. But according to the Austrians--or so it appeared--it was to art and art production that the task of establishing an ethical and aesthetic value system for the achievements of technology should be assigned. According to Hermann Broch's essay, "Die fröhliche Apokalypse Wiens um 1900," the Viennese had always been disposed to allotting art such a function, even, or perhaps especially the art of the famous Hans Makart, which Broch designates as "Hoch-Dekoration:"

Aber Wien pochte auf seine Dekorations-Rechte, und es war - und das ist das Wesentliche - hierzu wirklich bis zu einem gewissen Grad befugt, nicht nur weil Dekorativität überhaupt ein grundlegendes Charakteristikum der Epoche bildete, sondern noch viel mehr, weil sie in der Musik- und Theatertradition Österreichs ihre reinste und schönste Auswirkung erfahren hatte.³⁶

The reasons for this attitude are closely related to

³⁶ Broch, "Apocalypse," Wunberg 90.

developments peculiar to Austria and to the concepts of repressed Enlightenment and delayed humanism, which will be dealt with at length throughout this study. At present it will suffice to say that, based on economic and cultural traditions in Austria, theater and other forms of cultural entertainment had never lost the potency of purpose that the early fathers of the Enlightenment had intended for them, albeit here in Vienna for quite different reasons. The didactic intentions of the early eighteenth century theater in Germany, the bulwark of the rising bourgeoisie, would never have risen to popularity in Austria, for many of the economic and political developments of the later decades of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century, which paved the way for Germany's industrial revolution, never influenced the agrarian south. The economic boom in Germany and the rise of the bourgeoisie, both of which led to the expansion of cities and industrial centers long before 1800, did not reach Austria until nearly a century later.

The City on the Danube

It was not until after the Revolutions of 1848 that the liberalist era and development towards modernization began in Vienna. This politically uneventful

period was accompanied by a general economic upswing and the expansion of the "Residenzstadt" of the Habsburgs. Vienna, politically the center of a powerful empire, economically the dominant pole of the European Southeast, culturally a world center and geographically situated on one of the most likely sites for expansion on all of the continent, already satisfied the basic prerequisites for a world capital. With the end of the revolution and the consequent ousting of Metternich, whose reign had stunted the political, economic and cultural growth of the city since the early part of the century, the path to modernization was cleared of many obstacles.

As early as the middle of the century, the city wall of Vienna had begun to show signs of strain from the expansion within. In order to relieve this strain, the Emperor Franz Joseph I issued a handwritten declaration legalizing the leveling of the fortification which had stood for 800 hundred years. It would not take the Viennese more than 20 years to erect in its place the nine major representational "Gründerzeit" buildings of the Ringstraße: the State Opera, the Academy of the Arts, the National Museums, the City Hall, Parliament, the University of Vienna, the State Theater, the Stock Exchange and the Winter Residence itself. The "Gründerzeit" style, with its baroque

ornamentation and three dimensional reliefs, characterizes the architecture of these structures, which are linked to one another by elaborately planned gardens and numerous monuments to ideas and ideals of state and culture.

But the architectural endeavors directly related to state and municipality were not the only manifestations of new growth. Much of the construction was closely tied to the recently acquired bourgeois sense of self, which led to the building of scores of apartment complexes, schools and enclosed marketplaces.³⁷ Even the course of the Danube was regulated in order to accommodate the needs of the export-import undertakings that had mushroomed since the beginning of Austria's era of liberalism. The outskirts of the city were joined together by a commuter train system, designed by the well-known architect Otto Wagner, whose contributions to Vienna's facade remain tourist attractions and the pride of all Viennese to this day.

The energy and expense of such vast improvements, with all their indications of growth and prosperity, were not always judged positively in the minds of the Viennese. Rosa Mayreder reports in her memoirs, Das

³⁷ Fred Henning's social history in popular science format is invaluable for information about the growth of Vienna in the mid-1800's.

Haus in der Landskronngasse, of the overly ambitious enterprises of the period, which destroyed a piece of cultural inheritance as she had known it in her youth, a piece of cultural inheritance that would never be regained:

Es war eine unerträgliche Entweihung, als beim Bau der Zahnradbahn auf dem Kahlenberg der Beethovengang durch eine Böschung zur Hälfte verschüttet und in einen Hohlweg verwandelt wurde, wobei die schönsten der alten Nußbäume fallen mußten. In späteren Jahren habe ich einmal einen auswärtigen Freund Hugo Wolfs, Oskar Grohe, der die musikalischen Erinnerungsstätten Wiens besuchen kam, auch in den Beethovengang geführt. Betreten sah er sich um und sagte schmerzlich erstaunt: "Und hier konnte Beethoven die Eingebung zur Pastorale finden?" Da empfand ich doppelt das Glück, daß ich die Stätte der Pastorale noch in ihrer ursprünglichen Lieblichkeit gekannt hatte. (HiL 57)

Political Tradition and Economic Structure

Rosa Mayreder had just reached the age of 32 when the final stages of the economic boom had begun to give way to a new epoch of intellectual, cultural and social upheaval. According to Viktor Zmegac, the year 1890 signifies the beginning of the last phases of the Danube Monarchy, which in the two decades before its demise could boast of the most complicated and contradictory political structures that had come out of Europe since the revolution of 1848. The period 40 years after the revolts of mid-century has often been idealized as the "belle epoche." But despite the intellectual and economic growth of the era, there were

increasing amounts of tension and political crisis, for which Austria's outmoded baroque government would invariably find some sort of compromise or emergency solution. The feudal tradition of the Danube Monarchy, which had acquired a deceptive face-lift through the cosmetic operations and reforms of "Josephinismus," was already beginning to crumble.³⁸

Perhaps part of the reason for this decay lay in the fact that Austria's industrialization was far behind that of other European nations. The population of this agrarian empire, in which most land-holdings were concentrated in the hands of a few nobles and the Church, had multiplied many times over since the reign of the Emperor Joseph I. Yet in the last decade of the epoch, not even one-fifth of this population lived in industrialized areas. The industrialization of Austria

³⁸ Viktor Zmegac, Geschichte, 256-258. "Josephinism" is the term that designates the Austrian version of enlightened absolutism. Within this process of secularization, the Catholic Church of Austria came under the jurisdiction of the state in what was to become one of the most significant factors to shape the cultural and political future of the Danube Monarchy. Joseph II (1741-1790) provided legislative and social reforms that were unusual for his time--the creation of a municipal and state bureaucracy, the elimination of certain types of censorship, religious freedom, the abolishment of torture, the creation of a medical school and facility for the treatment of rich and poor alike. See Paul P. Bernard, The Limits of Enlightenment. Also Hugo Hantsch, Die Geschichte Österreichs, vol.III.

was clearly behind that of the German nation, not only as a consequence of "particularism" (the endeavors of member states to maintain or regain as much independence as possible), but also due to an antiquated tax system. Within this pre-industrial state, small businesses remained the rule. What few concerns existed were financed with foreign capital, for the most part by the Germans.

Though the problems on the economic sector remained acute, they were trivial compared to the social antagonisms and class tensions present in every part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Hans Mommsen sums the situation up:

Die Spannung zwischen westeuropäischen bürgerlichen Formen und der in den beiden Großstädten entstehenden industriellen Massengesellschaft einerseits und der östlichen, patriarchalisch geprägten, ständischen Agrargesellschaft andererseits war denkbar groß. Die Überlagerung beider gesellschaftlichen Typen führte zu eigentümlichen soziologischen Phänomenen, die sich etwa in der ungewöhnlich heterogenen Parteibildung zeigen, bei der neben demokratischen Massenparteien ständische Klubs stehen.³⁹

The clashes between the many nations represented in the Empire, which with time became considerably more aggravated, seemed to overshadow most other political prob-

³⁹ Hans Mommsen, Die Sozialdemokratie und die Nationalitätenfrage im Habsburgischen Vielvölkerstaat, vol.I (Wien: Europa, 1963) 21.

lems.⁴⁰ The endeavors of the Czech population to emancipate itself, some of them quite successful, came at a time when the German-Austrian bourgeois parties had inaugurated new political programs defining the "foreign infiltration" they considered threatening. Even before the turn of the century there were strong tendencies towards the annexation of Austria onto Germany. The social democrats provided the only counterbalance to this inclination and in so doing remained both in theory and practice the only supranational party of the period.⁴¹ The programs of the social democrats (for which Rosa Mayreder showed great interest, without, however, actively taking part in the political arena) could nonetheless not compete with the increasing popularity of the anti-liberal Christian-Socialist Party, which heavily supported small-scale enterprises, retail trade and the middle-class farmer. The domestic and foreign tensions, which around the turn of the century were muffled and camouflaged at whatever expense, would eventually make themselves evident in constant government turnovers and in manifold changes in cabinet constellation of the last two decades of the Empire.⁴²

⁴⁰ Hennings gives accounts of the clashes between the groups throughout all five volumes of his social history.

⁴¹ Schorske 3-10.

⁴² See Fred Hennings for humorous accounts of the

Josephinism and the Plight of the Bourgeoisie

Despite the manifold changes in the social climate of the turn of the century, many of which seemed to point in the direction of a rapidly growing middle-class, the social infrastructure of Austria remained rooted in the feudal traditions of preceding centuries. The army, of course, had become infiltrated with bourgeois elements--a theme often expounded upon in the works of Schnitzler, Musil and Hofmannsthal.⁴³ But Austria itself remained a land "beherrscht vom Einfluß des Adels und der Nobel-Bourgeoisie."⁴⁴ For Austria was yet much the baroque state it had been during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Vienna and Paris were the most powerful capitals on the European Continent and the "Rivalität zwischen den Häusern Bourbon und Habsburg...die Achse [war], um die sich die Weltpolitik drehte."⁴⁵ Hermann Broch is successful in

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day-to-day restructuring of the cabinets.

⁴³ Examples are Schnitzler's novella Leutnant Gustl, Musil's Törless and Hofmannsthal's "Soldatengeschichte."

⁴⁴ Robert Musil, "Der Anschluß an Deutschland," in: Gesammelte Werke 8: Essays und Reden (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1978) 1040.

⁴⁵ Broch, "Apokalypse," Wunberg 92.

capturing the developments in Austria after the reforms of Joseph II had thwarted all inclinations towards revolution:

Während Paris seine Barockstruktur in Revolutionsstößen überwand und sich hierdurch die Entfaltung zu der in ihm bereits keimenden Weltstadt ermöglichte, ist Wien Barockstadt geblieben... Damit ein Aufstand über sich selbst hinauswachsen und zur Revolution werde, muß er - wie in Frankreich 1789 - Weltwirkung erlangen, muß er - wie dies im 19. Jahrhundert immer deutlicher wurde - zur Weltrevolution hinstreben... Und gerade hierfür war Österreich als ein Land, das seine weltpolitische Mission teils verloren, teils vertan hatte, denkbar ungeeignet. Nach 1848 geriet die Stadt, selbst ihre Proletarierviertel nicht ausgenommen, immer tiefer ins Unrevolutionäre, ins Hedonistische, ins Skeptisch-Freundliche, Freundlich-Skeptische; Wien wurde zur Un-Weltstadt, und ohne darum zur Kleinstadt zu werden, suchte es kleinstädtische Ruhe, kleinstädtische Engsicht, kleinstädtische Freuden, den Reiz des Einst: es war noch Metropole, aber Barock-Metropole, und zwar eine, für die es keine Barock-Politik mehr gab.⁴⁶

The tendency to hold on to traditional forms and gestures, symbolized best by such phenomena as the "k.u.k. Hoflieferanten,"⁴⁷ is also reflected in the Viennese affinity for the theater, which dates back to the "Hoftheater" of the baroque era and its subsequent reformation during the following centuries as a bridge

⁴⁶ Broch, "Apokalypse," Wunberg 95-96.

⁴⁷ See Robert Musil's essay "Kakanien," one of the first sub-chapters of Mann ohne Eigenschaften (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1952) 31-35.

between the monarchy and the Viennese populace.

Das große Konzert, die große Oper wie überhaupt das Theater, sie allesamt der Späre des Privaten entrückt, standen da gegen die Kammermusik und das Stilleben, und ebendarum bildeten sie eine jener Brücken, durch die das Volk in unmittelbaren Kontakt gebracht werden konnte.⁴⁸

"Die Kammermusik und das Stilleben" referred to in this passage designate the private sphere, to which the bourgeoisie had been condemned, for, as Broch puts it earlier in the same essay, "durch den Glanz des Hofes konnten den großen Adelsgeschlechtern die Nebenlinien und Kleinherren abspenstig gemacht werden." The result of this separation of private and public spheres was the creation of the Biedermeier culture, which in many ways resembled the family-oriented society of the early Enlightenment, but which for all practical purposes was, unlike its politically potent counterpart in eighteenth century Germany, rendered totally powerless.

Indem an die Stelle der bürgerlich-privaten Intimität, in die der protestantische Säkularisierungsprozeß notwendigerweise zu münden hatte, das für Zuschauerschaft berechnete repräsentative Amusement des Souveräns gesetzt wurde..., wurde die Säkularisation in einem Bereich aufgegriffen, der dem Bürgerlichen und seiner Kunstübung schon aus rein technischen Gründen nahezu unerlangbar bleiben mußte.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Broch, "Apokalypse," Wunberg 93.

⁴⁹ Broch, "Apokalypse," Wunberg 93.

Instead of expending energy on cultural innovation, the germinating Austrian bourgeoisie of the first half of the nineteenth century went to work on the "normalization" of those infrastructural problems that the reforms of Josephinism had caused. The "Enlightenment" in Austria of the eighteenth century had not come as part of a natural cultural and social process. It had come as a revolutionary act and order of the emperor, which was soon to cause a great schism in the universalism heretofore protected by church and state. The social and religious reforms of Joseph II may themselves have been revolutionary in scope, but they had been designed to thwart any revolutionary inclinations that developments in France could have inspired. The right of succession proclaimed in 1804 was a typical political move for the period.⁵⁰

Yet for the budding bourgeois elements in Austria, to whom the means for cultural and artistic production were simply out of reach, the creation of a powerful state bureaucracy was a significant factor. It was an act of self-preservation for the "Kontinentalstaat des Barocks"⁵¹ that was to remain effective long after the

⁵⁰ See Ernst Benz, "Werden und Wandel des Kaisertums in Europa zwischen den Revolutionen 1789 und 1848," in: Wien und Europa zwischen den Revolutionen (Wien, Herold, 1978) 204ff.

⁵¹ Broch, "Apokalypse," Wunberg 92.

monarchy had died. It appeared as if the old universal order of church and state, which had suffered damage under the reign of Joseph II, would now be patched up and carried on by the newly created Austrian bureaucracy, whose mission was not only to oversee the modernization of the Reich, but also to guard the ideals of reason and the humanistic belief in the ability of mankind to improve the quality of life. Law in the sense of the juridical system, was "increasingly incorporated into a continuum of apparatuses (medical, administrative, and so on)" whose functions were for the most part regulatory.⁵²

"A normalizing society is the historical outcome of a technology of power centered on life."⁵³ Michael Foucault's theories on the repression of sexuality through its exploitation as a political issue since the Enlightenment are illuminating in the analogies they provide to the repression of bourgeois cultural expression in nineteenth century Austria. According to Foucault:

We have entered a phase of juridical regression in comparison with the pre-seventeenth-century societies we are acquainted with; we should not be deceived by all the Constitutions framed throughout the world since the

⁵² Foucault 144.

⁵³ Foucault 144.

French Revolution, the Codes written and revised, a whole continual and clamorous legislative activity: these were the forms that made an essentially normalizing power acceptable.⁵⁴

This "normalization" of which Foucault speaks is synonymous with the Enlightenment ideals of progress and development, which in eighteenth century Germany were strengthened by Protestant secularization. The political and cultural spheres of the evolving bourgeois class, which were laid open to juridical repression by the weakening of Church influence and the resulting demise of seventeenth century normative poetics, were immense. A literary innovation of the period, the bourgeois tragedies of Lessing and later of Schiller, are a typical example of the regulatory and corrective mechanisms and measures that the changes in power structure inspired.⁵⁵

But the "Barockstaat" in Austria did not have the same access to the secularization process as the Protestant Germans.

⁵⁴ Foucault 144.

⁵⁵ For general information concerning the bourgeois tragedies of the eighteenth century see Manfred Durzak, Zu Gotthold Ephraim Lessing: Poesie im bürgerlichen Zeitalter (Stuttgart: Klett, 1984). Also, Jürg Mathes, ed. Die Entwicklung des bürgerlichen Dramas im 18. Jahrhundert (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1974). Also: Alois Wierlacher, Das bürgerliche Drama: Seine theoretische Begründung im 18. Jahrhundert (Munich: Fink, 1968).

Diese neue [baroque] Staatsorganisation war zentralistisch orientiert, in Frankreich noch mehr als in Österreich, durfte aber um solchen Zentralismus willen weder ihre sozusagen natürlichen Verwaltungsgrundlagen, die im Feudalen und Kirchlichen verankert waren, verleugnen oder gar zerstören, noch durfte sie tyrannisch werden, da sie das Volk und besonders den Bürger, als Gegengewicht gegen die Macht der Feudal- und Kirchenherren zu verwenden hatte.⁵⁶

The Josephinian reforms were the answer to this dilemma. The "Volk" did not play much more than the role "eines staunenden Zuschauers," but according to Broch, the populace was at least given the impression that it had become a growing political factor: "als Partizipant des neuen Macht- und Prachtbewußtseins war das Volk...zum Träger eines gemeinsamen Lebensstils geworden."⁵⁷ The rising bourgeois elements were quickly appeased by the radical reforms, which at least superficially placed the administrative machinery in their hands. And by keeping the Church in the clutches of the Habsburg Court, it was gradually possible to rob it of some of its powers.

Vom Höfischen aus wurde es möglich, geistig-kulturelle Bereiche, die bis dahin ausschließlich vom Klerus bestellt worden waren, mehr und mehr zu säkularisieren, z.B. vermittels Gründung von Wissenschaftsakademien als vornehmlich höfische Einrichtungen.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Broch, "Apokalypse," Wunberg 92.

⁵⁷ Broch, "Apokalypse," Wunberg 93.

⁵⁸ Broch, "Apokalypse," Wunberg 92.

Thus, in order to satisfy the dictates of the Church and feudal organization, reforms were instigated that had apparently opposing effects on the rise of the bourgeoisie: firstly, a bureaucracy was placed in the hands of the new class; secondly, secularization was controlled by the courtly realm, a fact which of necessity hindered the development of specifically that bourgeois aesthetic so significant for the support of the new class' identity. Without the economic and social impetus to develop its own aesthetic concepts and artistic production, the new bourgeoisie was doomed to the labyrinth of bureaucracy for the duration. Ironically, it was the bureaucratic institutionalization and its resulting machinery that defined the continuous regulatory and corrective framework with which the Viennese artists of the Fin de siècle would have to contend.

There are two writers of the nineteenth century whose lives and writings reflect the bureaucratic institutionalization of Austria. It is not by chance that these two bourgeois writers of the period, Adalbert Stifter and Franz Grillparzer, were also employed by the state, since they could not depend on sufficient income from their writings. The plight of

the two men and their writings, which were never recognized during their lifetimes, were quite similar. Stifter's work, especially, shows characteristics that are typical for the nineteenth century's repression of historical continuity represented most clearly in the Biedermeier's cult of the family, but also ironically reflected in the "historicism" of late nineteenth century art and architecture, which, with its myriad of styles and forms of the past, is a mere expression of the period's own void of historical identity. The timelessness of the technological and bureaucratic "innovations," symbolized perhaps in the removal of Vienna's city wall or in the destruction of the "Beethoven-Gang," are symptomatic of the pragmatism that formed the basis of social and economic reforms.

Adalbert Stifter was employed as a school administrator, who, like the passive protagonists of his short prose works, believed in the acceptance of fate and the virtues of moderation. His detailed descriptions of nature as a symbol of regulated and "normalized" human existence (characterized in "das sanfte Gesetz" of his collection Bunte Steine, 1853) are indicative of his negative attitude towards the pathos of Enlightenment thought. It reminds one of a type of Catholicism, which has been transformed to a "zweifelhaften Gleichklang aufgeklärt-klassisch-romantischer mit scholas-

tisch-mittelalterlicher Humanität."⁵⁹ This translates into literary historicism, which is reflected in self-righteous complacency and contentment with existing conditions.

Stifter's language also echoes the pragmatism of theoretical formalism. For Stifter, language is a formal system that is as impersonal as the normative discourse of bureaucracy. Its orderliness reflects the need to resist the imminent threat of chaos and to construct a counter-existence through which the processes of history can be contained.⁶⁰ This attitude towards language is a preview of turn-of-the-century language theories represented in the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Karl Kraus, for whom language becomes the cornerstone of a Weltanschauung. An inversion of the same principle is also found in the skepticism towards language in general as a means of expression, which becomes prominent in the works of the Fin de siècle and reoccurs throughout literature of the twentieth century.

Franz Grillparzer, too, was a civil servant most

⁵⁹ Curt Hohoff, Adalbert Stifter (Düsseldorf: August Bagel, 1949) 114.

⁶⁰ Joseph Peter Stern, Idylls and Realities. Studies in 19th Century German Literature (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1971) 111 ff.

of his life. And though his dramas present in many ways an amalgamation of past traditions and historical traits (verse form and poetic language of the German classics, the verse form of the classical baroque dramas, skepticism towards the word as a means of expression), his characters do not exhibit the complacency of belief in convention that one finds in Stifter's works. In fact, the tragedy of their fate lies in their unwillingness to accept the bonds of socially sanctioned behavior. However, in his theoretical works and in his dramas, Grillparzer complied with the baroque tradition of constructing an aesthetic setting apart from the social reality of his own time. This compliance with the theater tradition of the "Barockstaat" in Austria bound Grillparzer and his works inadvertently to the forces of Viennese cultural life that denied the bourgeoisie the right to develop its own aesthetic expression.

Thus, as Broch stated, the process of secularization in Austria remained the territory of a "Barockstaatverwaltung" that "dem Bürgerlichen und seiner Kunstübung schon aus rein technischen Gründen nahezu unerreichbar bleiben mußte." Viktor Zmegac summarizes the plight of bourgeoisie literature as follows:

Die bürgerliche Aufklärung in Österreich blieb ihrem ersten Stadium verhaftet, dem Stadium des entschiedenen Kampfes gegen die Übermacht und die Tyrannei des katholischen

Klerus im gesellschaftlichen und kulturellen Leben. In Österreich trat keine eigene Form des Rousseauismus und des Sentimentalismus auf wie in der deutschen Geniezeit, der Epoche des Sturm und Drang. Goethes Werther fand keinen Widerhall in Österreich. Die Regierung Josephs II, des Sohns von Maria Theresia, begeisterte das österreichische Bürgertum durch die Liberalisierung des Buchdrucks... Aber die langjährige Herrschaft seines Nachfolgers... Franz I ...führte ein scharfes und erbarmungsloses Polizeiregime ein und auf dem Gebiet der Literaturproduktion eine allmächtige Zensur, die in jeder Zeile eines Buchs und in jeder Replik eines Theaterstücks gesellschaftsgefährdende Äußerungen witterte. Die Zensur ließ Aufführungen von Theaterwerken deutscher Schriftsteller der Aufklärung und der Klassik nur mit gekürztem und verfälschtem Text zu, so daß jene Werke von der Bühne aus nicht die Kraft ihrer künstlerischen Originalität entfalten konnten. Die österreichische Regierung unternahm noch andere, ähnliche Schritte: 1798 wurde der Beschluß gefaßt, die Philosophie Kants vom Studium an den Philosophischen Fakultäten auszuschließen, und 1808 wurde die Einfuhr ausländischer belletristischer Zeitschriften in den Staat verboten.⁶¹

Thus, the development of bourgeois aesthetics in Austria was hampered at its very inception. Austria of the nineteenth century, which was to set the stage for Fin-de-siècle culture, was "nicht nur im Geistigen, sondern auch im Politischen...museal geworden."⁶² The greatest legacy it had to offer was the array of magnificent theater houses which were monumental proof of

⁶¹ Viktor Zmegac, Kleine Geschichte der deutschen Literatur (Königstein: Athenäum, 1984) 179.

⁶² Broch, "Apokalypse," Wunberg 95.

the Viennese love for spectacle and decorative amusement and witness to the fact that much of cultural Vienna was to remain steeped in the baroque traditions of its great past throughout much of the nineteenth century.

Apolitical versus Feminist Writing

The theater-loving tradition of the "museal gewordene Stadt" Vienna did, however, produce a folk art in the first part of the last century that, though it had lost its satirical and socially critical flair by 1850, would for decades rival and eventually outlive the popularity of the courtly spectacles. The comical and biting satires of Johann Nestroy, which together with the more romantic plays of Ferdinand Raimund constituted the classical epoch of Viennese Folk Theater, were frequently expressions of bourgeois discontent cloaked in the fairy tale-like disguise also characteristic of many Grillparzer plays. This folk tradition, which was soon to give rise to the light Viennese operetta, lacked, in Broch's words, "jene[n] überaus weltstädtische[n] [Zynismus], dessen Aggression aus politischem Wollen her stammt, darin seinen moralischen Rückhalt findet und ebendarum für das Zustandekommen von Satire unerlässlich ist."⁶³

⁶³ Broch, "Apocalypse," Wunberg 96.

Nevertheless, the fact that Fin-de-siècle writers did not have a political program did not hinder them from carrying on the theater traditions of past centuries. Drama remained the most significant literary genre for the majority of artists in Vienna's decadent turn-of-the-century society whose similar social backgrounds and political "non-preferences" are reflected in their dramatic works. The widespread and virtually unquestioned apolitical aestheticism of the Viennese Modernists seemed to squelch even the occasional mildly critical comment on social conflict. The few exceptions to this rule (Schnitzler on anti-semitism) do not counteract the impression that the outsider cult of the Viennese cultural elite and the myriad of one-act plays and short dramas they produced were anything but political in nature.

Yet the theater, though void of any political function similar to that of the Enlightenment period, remained the bulwark of Fin-de-siècle literary expression. It had become an indispensable way of life for the Viennese, a staging of patterned behavior able to camouflage the symptoms of the coming apocalypse only Karl Kraus was willing to openly confront.⁶⁴ "[Das

⁶⁴ See Kraus' drama, Die letzten Tage der Menschheit, which is a satirical monument to Fin-de-siècle culture.

Theater] schien eine Verhaltensweise zu lehren, die es ermöglicht, in Rollen hineinzuschlüpfen, die nicht das eigene Ich aussprachen."⁶⁵ For instead of this open confrontation, Hofmannsthal and his cohorts preferred an escape into the artistic cultus described in his essay on D'Annunzio (1893) as follows: "Man treibt Anatomie des eigenen Seelenlebens, oder man träumt. [...] [M]odern ist die Zergliederung einer Laune, eines Seufzers, eines Skrupels; und modern ist die instinktmäßige, fast somnambule Hingabe an jede Offenbarung des Schönen, an einen Farbenakkord, eine funkelnde Metapher, eine wundervolle Allegorie."⁶⁶

There was, however, one great exception to this rule of apolitical behavior. The Viennese women who were active in literary circles did, indeed, become involved in the political and social issues of the day, and not exclusively with those pertaining to the "woman question." Their discursive writings, especially those of Rosa Mayreder which will be discussed in detail in the second chapter of this study, shed light on questions they as individuals felt significant to their

⁶⁵ Diersch, Empiriokritizismus, 161.

⁶⁶ Hugo von Hofmannsthal, "Gabriele d'Annunzio," Wunberg 343.

lives and to social change. The elitist cult of nuances, designed by their male counterparts and the motif of social "theater" with games and allocated roles, came under (not infrequently) vicious attack by the women writers of the period.

It was also these same bourgeois women who were involved in movements of political orientation or were members of organizations that supported social and legislative change. Many, like Rosa Mayreder and Auguste Fickert, founded their own journals and newspapers, since they would otherwise have had no means of expressing their views.⁶⁷ These politically active and concerned women may have grown up in the same milieu as their male cohorts--in a "Wertvakuum," or Viennese version of "Gründerzeit"--but they were much more apt to literally (or literarily) "take to the streets" on social and political problems than were their male fellows.

⁶⁷ Traditionally women writers had had no access to the theater, a fact that is reflected in the virtual void of dramatic writing by women to this day. See Bovenschen 216: "Damit sind zugleich einige indirekte Erklärungselemente dafür vorgegeben, warum die Frauen sich der Versdichtung sehr viel seltener und dem Drama nahezu überhaupt nicht zuwandten. Handelte es sich doch bei beiden um Gattungen, denen infolge ihrer erheblichen Tradition besonders hohe formale Maßstäbe gesteckt waren. In Bezug auf die dramatische Dichtung tritt noch ein weiteres Hinderungsmoment hinzu: das Drama bedarf zu seiner Realisierung einer anderen Institution, des Theaters."

The questions of apolitical attitude and outsider cult have often been raised, but all too frequently the reasons for these phenomena are not successfully elaborated with respect to the "woman question" in Austria at the turn of the century. Women writers, a minority from the onset, shut out of the mainstream of dramatic theory and creation, while at the same time limited in their access to publication, were destined to become yet another sub-set of the Viennese social hierarchy. Unlike some of the well-known woman writers of the nineteenth century--Annette von Droste-Hülshoff with her mystical, psychological prose and religious poetry; Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach, with "Dorfgeschichten" that only superficially represented the theme of humanitarian changes and social criticism--the bourgeois women writers of the Fin de siècle in many cases sought to expose, not to perpetuate, patriarchal practices. This attitude was their reaction to the manifold publications by psychologists and theorists of the second half of the nineteenth century, whose works were based on anthropological bias and reductionist evolutionary views and whose attempts to "explain" the phenomenon "woman" according to scientifically examined secondary sexual characteristics resulted in the "Strindbergschen 'Kampf der Geschlechter'" and the "Forderung der Frau nach Gleichberechtigung in Liebe, Ehe, Beruf und

Gesellschaft."⁶⁸

Problems with Publication

Another explanation for the outsider stance is an elementary matter of economics and basic arithmetic. There were few literary figures of the period, men or women, who did not have to go to a foreign publisher for at least the first editions of any given work. Perhaps it was a part of their "Austrian fate" that the writers of the period did not enjoy favorable conditions regarding their literary production. Part of the Austrian artist's dilemma at the time (not to speak of later years) was the fear of not finding circulation opportunities. A large number of first-publications (one is reminded here of the cases of Schnitzler and Hofmannsthal) were paid for by the authors themselves or were supported politically and financially by mentors like Hermann Bahr and Karl Kraus.⁶⁹ The fact that the homeland could not (nor would not) support

⁶⁸ Wagner, Geist und Geschlecht, 7.

⁶⁹ Wunberg, introduction to Die Wiener Moderne, 42. Wunberg cites the examples Schnitzler and Andrian: "Manch einer mochte sich auch lediglich seine [Bahr's] Vermittlung in Sachen Verlag zunutze machen, wie etwa Schnitzler mit dem Anatol-Zyklus oder Andrian mit dem Garten der Erkenntnis." Wunberg refers to Peter de Mendelssohns work, S. Fischer und sein Verlag (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1970) 200ff., 210ff.

their art virtually forced these young writers to seek other publishing possibilities. And since most of them could count on help from their well-to-do elders, private publication was not always their last resort.

The women of the period, though not unlike the male literary figures in their bourgeois origins, experienced quite a bit of luck with German publishers, who had recognized the market for women's literature and the growing demand for publication of women's discursive and belletristic works. Rosa Mayreder had her first books put on the market in Dresden, as did Grete Meisel Hess and Irma von Troll-Borostyani. An unwillingness on the part of homeland publishers, who had no perceived market for the works of their own native women writers, certainly had an adverse effect. However, it was the realized popularity of women's writings in Germany which made a great difference in the Austrian woman's attitude towards her works and their publication, even if that meant issuing abroad. The fact that women were beginning to join forces on an international level made the situation seem doubly thinkable.

That men writers of the period were of a totally different mindset becomes a relevant issue when one carefully examines the competitive nature of the relationship between German and Austrian literary figures

of the time. As Gotthart Wunberg reveals in the introduction to Die Wiener Moderne, the situation in Vienna before the turn of the century became with time one of distinct rivalry between the authors of Vienna and those of the naturalist movement in Germany. Women had never had the same political or nationalistic identity and did not consider themselves the rivals of the German movement. They had been and would continue to be destined to go their own way.

Rosa Mayreder: "Grenzgängerin der Moderne"

Although Rosa Mayreder, like her contemporaries, was forced to publish her first novellas and novels in Germany, her connections to Viennese newspaper publishers (often through her contacts from the salon circles she attended) also worked to her advantage. In addition, Mayreder was financially in the position to found a leading women's documentary (together with Auguste Fickert and Marie Lang). This journal, Dokumente der Frauen, became a forum for discussion and information for women that by 1912 (the year it was taken off the market) had earned international acclaim. Rosa Mayreder's early contributions to the woman question were published in this journal for the first time. Among the titles were "Frauenvereine," "Zur Physiologie der Geschlechter," "Die schöne Weiblichkeit" (all from

the year 1899), and "Familienliteratur" (1900), most of which became subchapters of a collection of philosophical and discursive writings published only a few years later. Mayreder's advantage over other contemporary women writers with respect to publication is certainly of consequence; it, more than any other factor, contributed to the unfolding of her essay style and promoted the development of her feminist essayistic writing in general.

As a direct result of these opportunities to publish, Rosa Mayreder was well known in her own day, both in Austria and abroad.⁷⁰ Today, however, her writings are not a subject for investigation, at least not for many. In fact, until a short time ago, those who knew of her life and writings happened upon the information by chance, perhaps through the mention of her name in William Johnson's work, The Austrian Mind. It was not until a collection of her discursive works was published in 1981, coincidentally by a German (not Austrian) publishing company for women's literature called "Frauenoffensive," that anyone inside or outside

⁷⁰ See Hanna Schnedl-Bubenicek, "Grenzgängerin der Moderne. Studien zur Emanzipation in Texten von Rosa Mayreder," in: Das ewige Klischee: Zum Rollenbild und Selbstverständnis bei Männern und Frauen (Wien: Böhlau, 1981). See also the introduction to: Rosa Mayreder, Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit, ed and intro. Hanna Schnedl.

Vienna (except William Johnston) knew she existed. This relatively inexpensive pocketbook edition of critical cultural and social essays has done much to change the attitude of Viennese feminists and their supporters towards women's works of the turn of the century. The selection of philosophical and social treatises combines works from both Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit (first published in 1905 by Eugene Diederichs in Jena and subsequently by Viennese publishers in the years 1907 and 1922) as well as from Geschlecht und Kultur (first published by Diederichs in Jena in the year 1923), both of which contain material that is not only pertinent and essential for a better understanding of Mayreder's view of the women's movement, but also invaluable in understanding her creative writings.

This recent publication has rendered Rosa Mayreder's contributions accessible to a larger circle of readers than ever before, readers who might have known of Mayreder as co-founder of the woman's magazine Dokumente der Frauen or perhaps as the librettist of Hugo Wolf's Opera "The Three-Cornered Hat" ("Der Corrigedor"), but who had never heard of her philosophical essays or her belles lettres. They have now discovered that Mayreder's discursive writings contain essays on topics that are as significant today as they were in

her own day, perhaps more. As a forerunner of modern Women's Studies, Rosa Mayreder criticized the myths that surrounded womanhood and the images of women, especially those that formed a basis for the works of her contemporaries, among them Sigmund Freud and Otto Weininger. Her concern about the lack of a history of women and society's ignorance of this fact is reflected in many of her essays, in which she sharply criticizes traditional anthropological and biological bias. Mayreder also realized that the subordination of women throughout the history of Western civilization had been attained by the creation of a succession of myths, to which woman's only answer has been silence:

Allerdings - das Schweigen über sich selbst war während der ganzen Kulturgeschichte ein unverbrüchliches Gebot der Weiblichkeit. Aus vielerlei Gründen und wohlweislich, wie es die Abhängigkeit von Gnade und Ungnade, Beifall und Mißfallen eines Stärkeren eben mit sich bringt.⁷¹

Mayreder did not limit her criticism to journal and newspaper articles. She also went out onto the street to protest the functionalization of women and to make repeated public acclamations against prostitution, demanding that the rights of the woman to self-determination in matters of sexual identity be recognized.

⁷¹ Rosa Mayreder, "Der Weg der weiblichen Erotik," originally in Geschlecht und Kultur; KdW 217.

However, though she may have done much to further the cause of women, there has been little research on the works of Rosa Mayreder. Käthe Braun Prager, a personal friend of Mayreder's who is responsible for having saved many manuscripts before she fled to England in 1938, published Mayreder's memoirs when she returned to Vienna in 1948. Shortly after Prager's publication, a young woman by the name of Herta Dworschak wrote a dissertation on Mayreder and her writings--a study that did not go beyond a compilation of works and biographical data, albeit with a rather detailed elaboration on the libretto of Wolf's "Der Corrigedor."⁷² In 1985, four years after Schnedl's publication, an Englishwoman by the name of Harriet Anderson wrote another dissertation, a critique of the philosophical writings from the perspective of Mayreder's contemporaries. But Anderson's work is practically void of the questions that historical and modern feminist perspective and theory have posed, questions which serve to establish the significance of Mayreder's thought within the history of feminist writing. The bulk of Anderson's work represents a dry interpretation of Mayreder's evolutionist theories

⁷² Herta Dworschak, "Rosa Obermayer-Mayreder: Leben und Werk," diss., Vienna, 1948.

without expansion on the historical standpoint from which Mayreder was writing and without elaboration on the innovative qualities of Mayreder's work.⁷³

All in all, with the exception of the collection of essays, its introduction, and one other short article by Schnedl, the world has for all practical purposes forgotten the Viennese writer Rosa Mayreder. Certainly Mayreder's philosophical works, her essays and critiques, have received far more attention than her creative writings. This interest in the discursive mode comes in response to the feminist movement's demand for women's writings in general, especially those which promote propaganda for the movement or aid in filling the gaps which patriarchal suppression and the "history of silence" have left in Western civilization. Yet this emphasis on Mayreder's philosophical treatises labels her exclusively as a revolutionary member of the women's movement in Vienna and denies the literary and aesthetic components of her work their due

⁷³ However, one contribution of Anderson's cannot be overlooked: she is responsible for the compilation of Mayreder's diaries. This publication has been invaluable to the research of the present study, since it provides ample sources for the illumination of Mayreder's philosophical thought through biographical data. See: Harriet Anderson, ed. Rosa Mayreder. Tagebücher 1873-1937 (Frankfurt: Insel, 1988). The diary entries from this work will be quoted as "D, date."

respect. Indeed, there is a total neglect of the interdependence between the belles lettres and discursive writings that is crucial for an understanding of her thought.

The fact that the aesthetic and purely literary qualities of Mayreder's work have been left unexamined clearly indicates the shortcomings of feminist research on Mayreder up to this point. For Mayreder thought of herself not only as philosopher but also as a creative artist. She endeavored to formulate new ideals to counteract the "Wert-Vakuum" of Viennese society. These new ideals were not intended exclusively for sociological and cultural enrichment. They were also intended as a contribution to the "new poetics" of the same "Jung Wien" generation of which she supposedly wanted no part. Aesthetically Mayreder sought an almost religious foundation of a new bourgeois individualism; philosophically she encouraged a reformulation of bourgeois moral consciousness not unlike the ideals of Hugo von Hofmannsthal. A one-sided approach to her works necessarily limits the basis for a critical approximation of the internalization of patriarchal projections--projections of which the author considered herself unremittingly conscious.

In an endeavor to uncover the internalization of such projections, the present study will also include

an analysis of Mayreder's earlier prose. The theoretical concepts function as paralipomena, especially where her prose regresses to traditional sexist or suppressive tactics she purports to have overcome. This clarification of contradictions found both in the theoretical concepts and in the literary formations goes far beyond the interpretations that have thus far concentrated on the feminist character of Mayreder's writings. It is not the peripheral symptoms, but the contradictions of the central issues which objectively reflect the state of art in a period of transition and point out the ambivalence within the attitudes of the artist as well. Rosa Mayreder, for one, oscillates between bourgeois tradition and emancipatory efforts, all the while flirting with utopian goals of social innovation (herself never consciously aware of the naturalistic implications of the latter). Intellectually and rationally she is quite conscious of most symptoms of decay and specious prosperity: with well-construed and artistically applied literary means she is able to unmask deeply rooted behavioral patterns and mechanisms (an example here is her description of the pedagogical and conditioning education of women by men) that are no longer perceived on a conscious level in Western society, but that have greatly influenced the battle between the sexes in the last three hundred years. On

the other hand, where intellectual and rational faculties are no longer effective, Mayreder is, in fact to an astonishing degree, still mired in the clutches of contemporary trends and the traditional mind-sets of her social origins. She emphasizes the socio-cultural determinants of women's roles in society, all the while carefully avoiding the slightest aggravation of the diverse factions of bourgeois sentiment (not to mention her refusal to contend with the lower classes). Her thought patterns, running forever dichotomically, leave row upon row of polarizations that accentuate the two-dimensional perspective of some of her prose.

Rosa Mayreder's early vignettes, novellas, and novels, steeped in humanistic traditions, are just as deeply rooted in the aesthetic innovations of the nineteenth century as those of her contemporaries. The turning inward, typical of a new self-awareness, together with a psychological perspective of the world, became part of the Fin de siècle's heterogeneity of "isms," which can be traced to a "denunciation" of naturalism. Mayreder's works are no exception.

The question is, why did these writings lay buried in libraries and archives until just recently? The answer has little or nothing to do with whether or not Mayreder's prose owes more to literary tradition. Rather this phenomenon can be more easily explained by

an understanding of the supertemporal demands that Mayreder placed upon her own works. Her evocation of new bourgeois ideals and a doctrine of eros had, at least at first glance, little in common with the endeavors of most of her contemporaries to break the hold of naturalism. German realism, which in its search to bridge the gap between objective reality and the subjective perception of reality was firmly rejected by the naturalists, appears more akin to Mayreder's writings than do the anti-naturalist works of her fellow Viennese authors.

Perhaps part of the answer to this question lies in the fact that Mayreder, like the representatives of "Jung Wien," did not take into consideration the fact that her own works were based upon a scientifically established school of naturalist thought. Without the experimental methods of the naturalist era where psychoanalysis has its roots, Hermann Bahr's "Kunst der Nerven" and its subsequent "Sezierung der Nervenstände" would have hardly survived the incubation period.

An diesem Punkt begann die Psychoanalyse schon in ihren Anfängen für die Literatur wichtig zu werden. Mit ihrer Hilfe ließ sich der Blick einer nachromantischen Generation nach innen lenken, ohne daß der wissenschaftliche Geist des Zeitalters verletzt worden wäre.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Worbs 8.

In the same sense the Fin-de-siècle can be described as a "Synthese von Naturalismus und Romantik, Positivismus und Psychologie, Leben und Traum."⁷⁵

Rosa Mayreder grew up experiencing the burst of growth that would transform the art and literature of her beloved Vienna into just such a synthesis. There was no denying the influence of German naturalist writings upon literary production of the "Jung Wiener," nor could there be any mistaking the vitalism of the romantic era. Yet even more important than the influence of traditional literary forms upon the "Jung Wiener" and their contemporaries were the effects of the political and social upheavals in late nineteenth century Vienna, most of which could be traced back to the rise and fall of the libertine era, the same Austrian liberalism that had emerged from the initial struggles against the aristocracy and baroque absolutism. After the "stunning defeat of 1848," the liberals of Austria's nation of many nations "came to power and established a constitutional régime in the 1860's almost by default."

Not their own internal strength, but the defeats of the old order at the hands of foreign enemies brought the liberals to the helm of the state. From the first, they had to share their power with the aristocracy and the imperial bureaucracy. Even during their two decades of rule, the liberals' social base remained weak, confined to the middle-

⁷⁵ Worbs 8.

class Germans and German Jews of the urban centers. Increasingly identified with capitalism, they maintained parliamentary power by the undemocratic device of the restricted franchise.⁷⁶

The backdrop of this rise to political power consisted of, literally speaking, the "decorative" frescos of Hans Makart, a painter of the period of historicism, whose popularity rivaled even that of the Kaiser.

But just as Makart had risen to fame and then fallen, so did the liberals. The various social groups which challenged liberalism, among them the anti-Semitic Christian Socials and the Pan-Germans as well as the Slavic nationals, rapidly succeeded in weakening the liberal bastion. It is precisely this rise and the ensuing crisis of liberalism, so essential to the spirit and "Zeitgeist" of Fin-de-siècle Vienna, that Rosa Mayreder captures and illuminates in her earlier prose.

Mayreder's writings depict this social and political climate of turn-of-the-century bourgeois existence. Yet her works go beyond a panoramic swing of Viennese life. They are witness to her high esteem for the creative individual. The artist becomes a savior of the future whose task it is to revere mankind and the need to create. In this sense Mayreder's posture

⁷⁶ Schorske 5.

closely resembles that of the aesthetes of the day who had found their "savior" in the prominent literary critic and author Hermann Bahr. Yet Mayreder publicly denounces the aesthetic cultism of her contemporaries at every given opportunity.

Although Mayreder's major contribution to the arts emerged from her writings, she was also known by her contemporaries for her still-life paintings. The acknowledgement she received for both these paintings and for various reviews published in Viennese art magazines demonstrates her enthusiasm for diverse facets of cultural life. In fact, it was not until shortly before 1900 that Mayreder lay down her brush to devote her undivided attention to penmanship. Prior to 1908 she was primarily involved with creative writing; subsequently she concentrated her efforts on philosophical treatises and discursive essays.

Yet long before Mayreder took pen in hand to disclose her views on society's suppression of women she had already become involved in the emancipation process. Her many functions and activities within the women's organizations of her day grew out of a predilection for the advancement of women that can be traced back to her childhood, as memories recorded in Das Haus in der Landskrongasse clearly document:

Wenn er schon den Kindern gegenüber und als Herr der Hauses völlig den pater familias

alten Schlages verkörperte, so war sein Auftreten gegenüber den Frauen im allgemeinen ein sehr rigoroses und grenzte gegenüber seiner eigenen an Tyrannei. Die Frau war in seinen Augen durchaus nur Mittel zum Zweck;...sie hatte die Kinder nur auf die Welt zu bringen. (HiL 75)

Hanna Schnedl-Bubenicek summarizes Mayreder's familial relationships, especially the ambivalent father-daughter bond, as follows:

An ihrem Vater, einem liberalen 'Achtundvierziger,' bemerkt sie den Bruch zwischen politischer Toleranz und patriarchalisch-autoritärem Verhalten, an ihrer Mutter die Unterdrückung der eigenen Interessen und die Projektionen unerfüllter Wünsche auf ihre Söhne, die, im Gegensatz zur Schwester, zwar unbegabter und lernunwilliger, aber fürs Studium ausersehen sind. Wie sie sich als junges Mädchen trotz des Widerspruchs ihrer Umgebung im wahrsten Sinne des Wortes des Korsettzwanges entledigt, folgt sie auch ihren Bedürfnissen nach geistiger Auseinandersetzung im Widerstand gegen dominierende Frauenbilder und herrschende Familienzünge ihrer Zeit.⁷⁷

Rosa Mayreder's father, Franz Obermayer, a Protestant and professed liberal, was not unlike other so-called liberals of his day for whom the vestiges of Metternich's authoritarian policies of suppression still reared their ugly heads (and not simply where women were concerned). To make things worse, Rosa's early adolescent rejection of conventional womanhood and her thirst for knowledge made her a particularly

⁷⁷ Schnedl-Bubenicek, "Grenzgängerin," 179-80.

"difficult" child, especially in the eyes of her mother. As a result, Rosa's inner need to overthrow the limitations of convention was roused early in her development.

Ohne daß ich mir noch Rechenschaft geben konnte, woher es kam, daß alles, was Herkommen, Tradition, Schicklichkeit hieß, bei mir nicht mehr die Ehrfurcht erweckte, die meine Umgebung dafür empfand und voraussetzte, war ich doch nicht im Zweifel, daß ich mir selbst folgen mußte und nicht den überlieferten Anweisungen. Die innere Stimme forderte unbedingt Auflehnung, nicht Unterwerfung. (HiL 158-159)

Rosa Mayreder literally cast off the corset at age eighteen. Though insignificant as a biographical detail, this gesture has become symbolic of the young autodidact and her quest for the free development of personality, independent of sex. The next chapter of this study will examine the development of the philosophical essays which outline that quest and will shed light on Mayreder's depiction of turn-of-the-century Viennese society as well as on her portrayal of women.

Summary

The discovery of contradictions that lie nestled between rational pretention and idealistic traditions contributes to the structuring of a freudian psychogram of sorts--a description of the subconscious and unconscious motivational levels of this Viennese woman-writer, who, like other representatives of Viennese

Modernism, from a romanticist's perspective "die Schilderung der Innenwelt und damit ein radikales Durchleuchten der Phantasie zu formulieren versucht."⁷⁸ The focus of the next pages highlights the themes of eroticism and power-mechanisms, both common and therefore essential elements to an understanding of Fin-de-siècle literature. The many contradictions of the writings examined here become a reflection of the manifold currents in art and the repeated upheavals in social climate, which were to herald the approach of the twentieth century.

⁷⁸ Worbs 9.

Chapter 2

The Essay of Feminism:

Rosa Mayreder's Non-Fictional Works

The essay, or a bastardized form of it, has been present in German literature for centuries. According to Ludwig Rohner in his 900-page treatise on the German version, this literary genre itself was used by German scholars as early as the Enlightenment, perhaps at that time not under the same name, but without a doubt in a form comparable to that of the modern essay.¹ It was not, however, until Hermann Grimm popularized the form in the mid-nineteenth century that German scholars became conscious of the genre "essay" as a literary short form. Since that time, Germans have assigned the essay a wide range of definitions: "a short prose composition," "a critical composition of supertemporal validity," "a literary and critical portrait fashioned after the English and the French versions."² And there have been definitions such as this one: "The expression

¹ Ludwig Rohner, Der deutsche Essay: Materialien zur Geschichte und Ästhetik einer literarischen Gattung (Berlin: Luchterhand, 1966) 88. Refer also to: Dieter Bachmann, Essay und Essayismus (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969); Hermann Kähler, Von Hofmannsthal bis Benjamin: Ein Streifzug durch die Essayistik der zwanziger Jahre (Berlin: Aufbau, 1982); Graham Good, The Observing Self: Rediscovering the Essay (New York: Routledge, 1988).

² Rohner 111.

'essay' usually designates the length of the piece; otherwise it is an excuse for lack of coherence."³ The Sachwörterbuch der Literatur defines the genre in this manner:

Der Essay ist eine kürzere Abhandlung über einen wissenschaftlichen Gegenstand, eine aktuelle Frage des geistigen, kulturellen oder sozialen Lebens u.ä. in leicht zugänglicher, doch künstlerisch wie bildungsmäßig anspruchsvoller, geistreicher und ästhetisch befriedigender Form, gekennzeichnet durch bewußte Subjektivität der Auffassung, die dem Essay auch im Fall überholter wissenschaftlicher Voraussetzungen im einzelnen als geistigem Zeugnis seines Schöpfers bleibenden Wert gibt, bewußten Verzicht auf systematische und erschöpfende Analyse des Sachwertes zugunsten mosaikhafte lockerer, das Thema von verschiedenen Seiten fast willkürlich, sprunghaft-assoziativ belichtender Gedankenfügung, die wesentiefte individuelle Erkenntnisse zu vermitteln sucht, ein Nachvollziehen des persönlichen Erlebnisses erstrebt und das Thema in großen Zusammenhängen sieht. . . . Der Essay gilt daher als offene Form von fragmentarischer Wahrheit, als ein Schwebezustand zwischen Wissen und Zweifel, und unterscheidet sich durch die subjektive Formulierung von der streng wissenschaftlich-sachlichen Abhandlung, durch das geistige Niveau und Streben nach zeitlosen Einsichten vom breiteren und oberflächlicheren journalistischen Feuilleton.⁴

Many of the basic characteristics of essayistic writing enumerated above made the essay as literary form especially suited to the program of the "Jung Wien"

³ Rohner 115.

⁴ Gero von Wilpert, Sachwörterbuch der Literatur (Stuttgart: Körner, 1969).

writers. The focus upon subjectivity and personal experience, the emphasis on aesthetics, the associative characteristics and open form--these traits contributed to its rediscovery and ensuing popularity among the "Jung Wien" writers. Says Dieter Bachmann, "Einer ungesicherten, krisenhaften Zeit, zu deren Charakteristikum die Haltung des Experiments gehört, entspreche die experimentelle Haltung des Essays."⁵ Contemporaries like Robert Musil saw in the essay a literary form appropriate to the situation of early twentieth century Europe, a predilection which is captured in David Luft's assessment of Musil's position:

In the literary and political journals of pre-war Germany Musil developed his characteristic vision of the predicament of European culture. He believed that the intellectual despair of his generation revolved around the polarity between science and mysticism, and he saw the essay as the literary form appropriate to this situation, the form of the thinking poet mediating between science and art.⁶

The essay's role as mediator in the crisis of European culture was predominant, since it provided intellectuals with one of the few mediums of expression left to their frailing liberalism. Yet there were other func-

⁵ Dieter Bachmann, Essay und Essayismus (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1969) 7.

⁶ David Luft, Robert Musil and the Crisis of the European Mind 1880-1942 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press) 101.

tions which the genre served with respect to the aesthetic and artistic demands of the period. The "Jung Wiener," frequently in need of justification for their new ventures, found in the essay form a viable platform. Breaking away from the dependency upon the German literary scene and the traditional genres it represented meant setting up their own program, a program Bahr had provided in his essay, "Die Moderne," a program whose vague message, as we have seen, would resound in the manifold essays of the period.

Perhaps the clearest of the modernists' intentions was this expression of a need for autonomy. During the early phase of the "Wiener Moderne," the essay provided authors with a form whose boundaries were flexible enough to express the "Wahrheit, wie jeder sie empfindet," boundaries within which their quest for autonomy, so restricted by the still existing feudal structure of the empire, would be taken seriously by the intellectual institutions of their day. The form of essay that grew out of this need was one quite unique to Austria at the turn of the century, a tradition that would be developed by authors such as Hofmannsthal, Musil and even Kraus. To be sure, the essays of these modernists had much in common with those of their fore-runners Montaigne and Bacon. In their quest for knowledge, both Montaigne and Bacon had found in the essay a

form in which to discuss matters in a more personal tone and to qualify previously observed authorities. It was a form which, in its later evolution, was to emerge "between the old and the new learning, rejecting the old method of uncritically accumulated commentary, but also refusing the systematic ambitions of the new science, despite sharing its conception of language."⁷ But where Montaigne's critical or skeptical attitude constituted "a special instance of the widespread departure from the procedures of medieval discourse,"⁸ and where Bacon's stress on observation and truth drew upon the empirical impulse of the early seventeenth century, the essayists of Fin-de-siècle Vienna found in the essay a new art form that offered "aesthetic knowledge."⁹ The essay was malleable enough that it could also be incorporated into the detached, skeptical world view of extensive epic pieces (the Musilean novel). Ironically, it was the essay's claim to legitimation through aesthetic knowledge which popularized the form in late nineteenth century, at a time when the Enlightenment quest for "knowledge" had been thwarted in its efforts by rampant skepticism.

⁷ Graham Good, The Observing Self, 3.

⁸ Good 2.

⁹ Good 9.

The Viennese were not the first to associate the genre with art. German philosophy since Kant had placed art in a central position, as Graham Good maintains:

Since Kant's placing of aesthetic judgement as a mediator between Verstand, the theoretical philosophy of Nature, and Vernunft, the practical philosophy of morality, art as knowledge and knowledge of art have been central issues in German philosophy. . . . The relatively late development of the [essay] genre in Germany meant that it lacked the associations with science and philosophy it had in France and England. Instead, it tended to be associated with art.¹⁰

In the same vein, Lane Kauffmann emphasizes the fact that thinkers in the German tradition of philosophical aesthetics "from Lessing to Adorno" had always "considered thought inseparable from its mode of presentation."¹¹ This conjuncture between essayism and aesthetic form continued to dominate essayistic writing in the German-speaking world until the turn of the century, when the bourgeois aesthetes of Austria would discover the essay as "Ausdruck eines intendierten Gegenkosmos oder der Absolutsetzung der Subjektivität."¹² It is within the framework of this reaction to

¹⁰ Good 15-16.

¹¹ R. Lane Kauffmann, "The Skewed Path: Essaying as Un-methodical Method," Diogenes, 143, 66-92 (75).

¹² Klaus Weissenberger, "Der Essay," in: Prosa-kunst ohne Erzählen: Die Gattungen der nicht-fiktionalen Kunstprosa (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985) 107.

the intellectual crisis of her day that Rosa Mayreder's essayism, too, was to develop.

But the increasing popularity of the essay form is not ascribable solely to its role in a program of aestheticism--a program of which Mayreder wanted no part. More importantly, those writers in Austria (including Mayreder) who chose the essay as literary form found that it was much more positively received in Germany than was its cousin the feuilleton, a genre which traditionally had been judged unfavorably by German literary critics due, at least in part, to its outwardly polemic nature. In connection with Wilpert's interpretation of the feuilleton as "eine oberflächliche journalistische Form," Rohner comments: "Diese Umschreibung gefällt sich in etwas überspannten Formulierungen und führt das alte deutsche Vorurteil gegen das Feuilleton noch immer mit; sie kann auch deswegen als repräsentativ gelten."¹³ This observation is one of historical significance, not only where the essay is concerned, but also with regard to the rise of the feuilleton as a counterpart to German essayism in late nineteenth-century Vienna. For many other Viennese writers, especially those in Hermann Bahr's circle, saw

¹³ Rohner 112.

in the feuilleton yet another opportunity to free themselves from a century-long dependency upon German literary forms and, of even greater consequence, of German book production. In short, the Austrian writers who could no longer profit from their connections to the German literary scene or who wanted an identity of their own were those most apt to choose literary forms outside the accepted canon. Those Austrians, however, who felt no need to divorce themselves from German naturalism or from German literary tutelage continued to write essays and to reap the benefits of established literary production.

With the advent of the feuilleton on the one hand, and the essay on the other, the Viennese aesthetes discovered modes of expression that would further foster the Fin-de-siècle sense of identity. Hermann Bahr had already done much to support the weaning away from Germany, and in so doing had not only nurtured the popularity of the feuilleton and the Austrian essay, but had also succeeded in drawing the attention of German critics to the beginning of a new Viennese literary era. After his exit from Berlin in 1891, it was clear to the German naturalists that they would have to reckon with competition from their Austrian cohorts. In connection with Bahr's departure, Gotthart Wunberg writes: "Der Bahr, der nach Berlin zurückkehrte, ver-

stand nicht mehr und wurde nicht mehr verstanden."¹⁴
 As early as 1896, Berlin critics were publicly acknowledging the new era in Austria. The newly popularized literary forms, especially the "Austrian essay," were undoubtedly part of the reason for this recognition.

'Jung Wien!?' Seit wann gibt es das? . . . Wir in Jung-Berlin stecken die Köpfe zusammen und tuscheln. Damals, vor fünf, sechs Jahren, als der Hermann Bahr von uns fortging, da gab es ein Jung-Wien noch nicht. Was sich etwa so hätte nennen mögen, darum uns zu kümmern, spürten wir jedenfalls keinen Anlaß. Wien, das war für uns Berliner - Provinz, ganz einfach! Es war eine stille freundliche Dependenz, die man vielleicht ab und zu einmal durch ein lobendes Wort aufmunterte. Heute sehen wir ganz anders hin.¹⁵

The tone set in this review by Franz Servaes does not echo the attitude and support of the preceding decade. Just six years earlier the German critics had found the Austrian "naturalist" newspaper edited by Eduard Michael Kafka and Hermann Bahr to be refreshingly conservative, "ein Organ des literarischen Realismus." In Michael Georg Conrad's Berliner naturalist journal, Die Gesellschaft, the critic Otto Julius Bierbaum had applauded the Austrian newspaper:

Ein prächtiges Neujahrsgeschenk ist uns aus Österreich geworden. . . . Das ist eine verheißungsvolle Tat für den deutschen Realis-

¹⁴ Wunberg, introduction, 48.

¹⁵ Franz Servaes, "Jung-Berlin. Zehn Jahre Literatur-Bewegung," in: Die Zeit, Wien, Nr. 112, Nov. 21, 1896, 124-126. See Wunberg 13.

mus, um so verheißungsvoller, als es den Anschein hat, daß sie die Fehler vermeiden wird, welche uns bisher so geschadet haben. . . . Die Moderne Dichtung wird ohne die Tobanfälle jugendlichen Kämpferzorns auskommen können, . . . sie wird sich auch wohl sicherlich nicht zur Unfehlbarkeitstribüne krankhaft geschwollenen Selbstbewußseins hergeben. Wenn der Realismus seine Flegeljahre nötig gehabt hat, so hat er es jetzt sicher nötig, aus ihnen herauszutreten. Wir begrüßen das Erscheinen der Modernen Dichtung als ein Symptom dafür, daß diese Erkenntnis immer mächtiger wird, und so begrüßen wir denn dieses neue Organ des literarischen Realismus überhaupt als ein schönes Zeichen des guten Fortgangs unserer Sache.¹⁶

It seems that within a period of just five or six years, the competitive nature of the German and Austrian literary "programs" had become evident. Bahr's "Überwindung des Naturalismus" and the program publication of the Moderne Rundschau (the later name of the Austrian publication) with its appeal for an "Überwindung aller kulturfeindlichen Mächte der Gegenwart" might just as well have been addressed to the Berlin naturalist publication Freie Bühne as a declaration of war, for hidden beneath the tame presentation of the Austrian publication, devoid of what Bierbaum called the "Tobanfälle jugendlichen Kämpferzorns," lay buried the seeds of both a new polemic form (the "Feuilleton Wiener Art") and the Viennese version of the essay,

¹⁶ Otto Julius Bierbaum, Review of the journal Modernen Dichtung, in: Die Gesellschaft, no. 6, Feb. 1890, 306. See Wunberg 20-21.

which would rival their German counterparts for decades to come.

The early influence of the German naturalists and their chosen literary forms upon the ideas and essayistic writings of the early "Jung Wien" authors was frequently presumed by the neighbors to the north (in the early 1890's not without reason). But the Viennese were soon to go their own way. The "Jung Wiener" may have called themselves "naturalists," but they saw their naturalism as one of Austrian vintage. As Wunberg points out, the Austrians had for centuries thought of themselves as more cosmopolitan than the Germans. They nurtured their ancient traditions and considered their literary accomplishments to be part of an international movement. On the other hand, the recent proclamation of the German Reich had left them somewhat defensive of their own political position. They began to yearn for something new that would have geographically and nationally defined character. It was as a result of this heretofore unheralded sense of identity among the "Jung Wiener," an imposing new self-awareness, that the "Feuilleton Wiener Art"--along with the essay--made its debut.

The birth of the "Wiener Feuilleton" and the "Wiener Essay" may initially appear to have little in common with feminist essayism. Yet the emphasis upon

these "new" forms within certain Viennese circles reflects the need for varied modes of expression beyond the traditional literary canon. In many ways Rosa Mayreder's fictional and non-fictional endeavors evolved from the same type of motivation that spurred her contemporaries forward. She, too, was conscious of creating something new, of a novel striving towards an improvement in the condition of mankind--a striving that is perhaps an inheritance of the naturalist period, except that the Viennese Modernists saw themselves as messiahs, not simply as "diagnosticians."

Die Naturalisten begnügten sich damit, die Situation zu diagnostizieren und sie für hoffnungslos zu halten. Die allgemein verbreitete Reaktion war: abwarten, warten auf die Zukunft der Literatur, den Messias. . . . Bahr wollte die Literatur nicht sich selbst überlassen; er wollte sie von Anfang an verändern.¹⁷

Mayreder's endeavors, however, had little in common with the "relativization of objective truth through conscious subjectivization," which was part of the Modernist program. According to this new subjective truth, the object becomes inconsequential; only the process counts. The perception of the object is accentuated. "Hier wird der Akzent vom Gegenstand auf seine Rezeption verlagert. Interessieren tut ihn [Bahr] nicht

¹⁷ Wunberg, introduction, 32.

mehr der Gegenstand, sondern der Prozeß."¹⁸ The fact that the essay form emphasizes dynamic process rather than finished product, heightens its suitability to a program in which the focal point becomes "der Prozeß." In the words of the Hungarian critic Georg Lukács, "Der Essay ist ein Gericht, doch nicht das Urteil ist das Wesentliche und Wertentscheidende an ihm (wie im System) sondern der Prozess des Richtens."¹⁹

Mayreder, on the other hand, purported to have no interest in the emphasis on aestheticism or in the "new" art, born of the merging of objective reality with the inner spirit. Fighting for the rights of women, which she considered her calling, was a contradiction to the apolitical "Dilettantismus" of the "Jung Wiener" (Leopold Andrian, Richard Beer-Hofmann, Schnitzler, Altenberg or the young Hofmannsthal). Neither did she find any common ground with the "Feuilletonisten," whose chosen art form, as we have seen, was not well received outside of Vienna and, therefore, seldom achieved acceptance for publication elsewhere. The essay was much more suited to her purposes: with its claim to artistic flexibility, it offered her a

¹⁸ Wunberg, introduction, 33.

¹⁹ George Lukács, Die Seele und die Formen (Berlin: Egon Fleischel, 1911) 38.

viable starting point for the discussion of the issues concerning women, a platform that remained independent of the reigning scientific and educational institutions. Certain characteristics which she may well have associated with the essay perhaps inspired this unchallenged independence in her opposition to the patriarchal system and its suppression of women, more so than any other literary form.

Denn er [der Essay] durchschaut, daß das Verlangen nach strikten Definitionen längst dazu herhält, durch festgesetzte Manipulationen der Begriffsbedeutungen das Irritierende und Gefährliche der Sachen wegzuschaffen, die in den Begriffen leben. . . . Während er die Begriffe aufeinander abstimmt vermöge ihrer Funktion im Kräfteparallelogramm der Sachen, scheut er zurück vor dem Oberbegriff, dem sie gemeinsam unterzuordnen wären; was dieser zu leisten bloß vortäuscht, weiß seine Methode als unlösbar und sucht es gleichwohl zu leisten.²⁰

This speculative negation of the identity between the order of things and the order of thoughts, hence the negation of the patriarchal order, may have inspired Mayreder to take advantage of this freedom of expression. Yet the form question may have been of minor importance. The essay also made the expression of her thought marketable, albeit outside of Austria. In the homeland she would have had stiff competition from

²⁰ Theodor W. Adorno, "Der Essay als Form," in: Noten zur Literatur (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1958) 9-49.

press and publication interests that either centered around total aestheticism, or lost themselves in the superficial polemics of the feuilleton, interests that remained quite apart from her own. And the Germans were not only far ahead in their publication of women's critical literature; as the circulation of essay collections increased, they also had the market demands for the very literary form which was to become Mayreder's most successful one.

At the same time Mayreder was developing her essay style, the Viennese press (newspapers such as the Neues Wiener Tagblatt) was satisfying its readers' demands by publishing increasing numbers of feuilletons. These entertaining, artistic, often scientifically oriented skits or sketches became the mouthpiece of a decaying, impotent bourgeois liberalism, that, as Carl Schorske put it, had risen to power "by default," and had just as effortlessly been ousted. Ironically, it was the fathers of those now defunct liberals who, during the Metternich era of the preceding decades, had found a rather potent expression in the satirical works and personality of Johann Nestroy. Nestroy had provided his contemporaries with socially critical "Volksstücke" whose satirical pointedness and parodistic gags had successfully defied the censorship of the first half of the century. The "Wiener Feuilleton" was little more

than a remnant of the earlier social defiance, an honest attempt on the part of the powerless liberals to counteract the "Wert-Vakuum" of their late 19th century political swoon.

This same impotent bourgeois setting may have afforded Rosa Mayreder financial security throughout her life, but her personality and writings defied any open identification with liberalism's frail endeavors to survive. Her keen observations on the symptoms of decadence in late 19th century Vienna led to a self-inflicted seclusion from which she launched a program of self-improvement and self-observation, a program which would prove the catalyst of her innovative style and unconventional message. The conflicts brought about by this voluntary exile are documented in her diaries:

Ja, es ist unendlich schwierig, sich selbst zu erziehen, ich beginne die Unmöglichkeit dieses Unternehmens fast einzusehen. Es stürzt mich in unlösbare Konflikte. Eines-theils muß ich an meinen eigenen Werth glauben, um die nagenden Zweifel an mir selbst zu besiegen und ihrem vernichtenden Einfluß nicht zu unterliegen; andrentheils darf ich dennoch keinen Augenblick mich vergessen lassen, wie fehlerhaft ich bin, damit nicht der Dünkel, zu dem ich so viel Anlage habe, überhand nehme. (D, Sept. 10, 1874)

The introspection of Rosa's adolescence was nurtured in part by her contacts with artists, philosophers and writers who supported her critical stance on the plight

of women and encouraged her involvement with other cultural and sociological issues of the day, most of which were ignored by the literary figures who made headlines in Vienna of 1900.²¹ This support for debate on issues apparently unpopular to the aesthetes of Vienna strengthened the forum from which Mayreder's essayistic writings would evolve.

Yet it is not exclusively Mayreder's critical stance that sets her apart from the "Wiener Moderne." She, too, was in search of a value system which would transcend and overcome the mere diagnosticism of the German naturalists.

Nein, nicht eine Ausnahme von der echten und rechten Weiblichkeit war ich in meinem Selbstbewußtsein, sondern die Ankündigung der Natur, daß sie kommende Generationen nach einem anderen Maß und Gesetz erschaffen wollte. Die Ausnahme von heute mußte die Regel von morgen sein, sonst hatte mein Leben keinen Sinn. (HiL 172)

Nonetheless, as a woman critical of average femininity and of the social conventions which foster it, she identified to a far greater extent with the ideals of the Enlightenment and its independent political thought

²¹ Among the members of the "Saturday evening circle" held at the Obermayer residence were the philosopher Friedrich Eckstein and newspaper editor Rudolf von Waldheim, along with other renowned and respected personalities of Viennese cultural life, who will be discussed as their influence upon Mayreder's thought and writings are taken into account.

than did her "Jung Wien" contemporaries, to whom not the "Erkenntnis" and the "Nachvollziehen des persönlichen Erlebnisses," but merely the description of "Seelenzustände" counted. This identification with ideals of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is evident in Mayreder's essays. Her self-projected image evolves from the same "unity of experience" that lent Montaigne's works their "serene individualism."²² Some of her earlier essays, like those of Montaigne, revert to establishing truth by providing authoritative support or by refuting quotations of "accepted" philosophical and psychological discourse, a prime example of which is the introductory essay entitled "Gründzüge" in the collection, Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit. This discussion of contradictory citations from popular misogynist discourse gradually gives way in the later essays to a more creative and aesthetic form from which her personal voice and experience emerge, distinguishing her work from the "Seelenbeschreibung" of her contemporaries.

The basic question here is one of self-image and of identification, or lack of it, with an existing social order. Rosa Mayreder was well aware of the fact that her own attempts to defend higher principles were

²² Kauffmann 69.

ground-breaking in scope. She acknowledged the lack of authentic expression with respect to women's existence throughout the history of civilization. At the age of sixteen she was already convinced of the need to break the history of silence and to eradicate traditional anthropological and biological bias:

Ich weiß nun, daß die Frauen die gleiche Berechtigung zu geistiger Beschäftigung haben wie die Männer, weil sie die Fähigkeit dazu haben, und die Natur nichts ohne Zweck schafft. Damit soll die leidige Frage für mich erledigt sein. Ich breite meine Arme aus, ich raffe zusammen, was ich nur erraffen kann, ich schwelge in Erkenntnis - ich lerne, lerne! (D, Feb.7, 1874)

On an individual level she undertook to support a woman's privilege to help in forming the definition of mankind:

Denn es stand fest für mich, daß ich das Recht, über die Schranken des weiblichen Pflichtenkreises hinauszuschreiten, nur besäße, wenn ich ein 'Phänomen' wäre, nämlich, daß ich es aus einer über diese Schranken hinausweisenden Befähigung und Aufgabe schöpfen konnte. (HiL 159)

What sets Mayreder apart from her male contemporaries is her aloofness to the "Problemkomplex Autonomie," where "das verdrängte und sublimierte politische Bedürfnis" are concerned.²³ As a woman she had little experience with the leading social, political, and scientific institutions of the day. The rivalry

²³ Wunberg, introduction, 43.

between Austria and Germany constituted only peripherally a motivating factor for her endeavors. The single aspect she had in common with Hermann Bahr, the "Organisator der österreichischen Literatur," was her intellectual homeland: Europe.²⁴ Mayreder, though undeniably influenced both thematically and stylistically by Austrian as well as German and French literary trends, found the intellectual basis for her writings in a critique of the patriarchal orientation of Western thought in general. The orientation of her thought as a critique of the very basis of Western society strengthened her own identity and widened the schism between her philosophy and that of the literary aesthetes of her day.

As a result of this schism, the nationalistic literary productivity sought by the Viennese modernists as a means of freeing themselves from the influence of German artists and rectifying their own loss of political identity remained an extraneous motive for Mayreder, especially since she, as a woman, had not been a part of that political identity in the first place. She was motivated purely by the desire to make her cause known. With little or no concern for the

²⁴ Karl Kraus ironically noted in his essay "Die demolierte Literatur:" "Europa, nicht Österreich, gar Wien, ist seine geistige Heimat."

autonomy of Austrian art, she was intent upon finding a means of expressing her ideas in a publishable manner, even where that meant the adoption of more traditional forms such as the essay and the novella. Her early essayistic attempts to justify the women's movement from an historical and scientific perspective provided more far-reaching insight and intuition than did thematically similar works of the period, which, though vast in number, remained entrenched in a mire of gender roles and sexist observations.²⁵ It was precisely this power of perception, strengthened by a new sense of identity, that carried Rosa Mayreder farther and farther adrift of conventional patriarchal attitudes.

Given the marked divergence of self-assessment, self-determination, and sense of purpose, which distinguished Mayreder from her Austrian contemporaries, it was clear, certainly to Mayreder, that the local magnates of newspaper and book publication, even those more liberal in orientation, would hardly cater to her

²⁵ See Bovenschen 19-43. Bovenschen's discussion of the philosophers George Simmel and Max Scheler shows that these two men recognized the confines of women's images within masculine parameters. That they, however, constantly exalted the "natural" powers of femininity, becomes in itself a dead give-away for the implicit reductionism of their theories. They, like many psychologists and philosophers of their time, were not always able to distinguish between the images and the lives of real women.

outcries of anti-patriarchal subversion.²⁶ It was also apparent to Mayreder that she would have to meet certain market demands, if and when she turned to German publishers. The fictional works were less of a problem, since there were several publishers already interested in women's literature: Pierson in Dresden, for example, to whom she went with her collection of novellas entitled Aus meiner Jugend and Übergänge. The philosophical essays, however, posed a somewhat more difficult problem. Traditionally, the German reading audience had an ambivalent attitude toward the essay as a literary form, considered by most to be foreign to the German language. Unlike the popular novella, whose original Italian form had been shaped and molded within the course of a century to fit the German language, the essay had not easily lent itself to Germanization. To some "die eigenste literarische Form unserer Zeit,"²⁷ to others it was "ein fremdländisches Gewächs, das nur in einzelnen Exemplaren zur vollen Höhe und Schönheit gelangt."²⁸ Nevertheless, the second half of the 19th

²⁶ It is worth noting again that Mayreder went to German publishers, to Pierson in Dresden with the novels and novellas prior to 1900 and to Eugene Diederichs of Jena with the discursive writings of 1905 and 1907, Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit. The novel Idole was published in the year 1899 by Fischer in Berlin.

²⁷ Rohner 116. Rohner quotes a critic (anonymous) from the year 1878.

²⁸ Rohner 116, quoted from the year 1884.

century saw the essay becoming a more popular form in German literature: "Angesichts der Fülle scheint der Schluß erlaubt: zwischen 1859 und 1914 gewann der Essay . . . ein beträchtliches Publikum unter der gebildeten deutschen Leserschaft."²⁹

One of the reasons for the essay's growing popularity was the support it received from the more conservative contemporaries of German naturalism, writers and critics who were intent upon weakening the hold of the "revolutionary" naturalists on book production and the magazine industry. These German "realists," among them Otto Julius Bierbaum (a critic of Michael Georg Conrad's naturalist newspaper Die Gesellschaft, who had praised the "gemäßigte Haltung" of the young Austrian "naturalists"), had become weary of the "Tobanfälle jugendlichen Kämpferzorns."³⁰ But the "realists" were not the only critics who had tired of the naturalists' graphic depiction of social misery and degeneration. In the year 1903, Alexander von Gleichen-Russwurm, critic and publisher, describes the reactions of publishers and readers alike to the abundance of naturalistic literature: "Vor jungen Zeitschriften scheuen

²⁹ Rohner 119.

³⁰ Wunberg, introduction, 20.

Verleger und Publikum zurück; so sind die Serien kleiner, zierlicher Bände in Mode gekommen, die alle Arten der Essays enthalten."³¹ The essay, at least for a short time, had become a contender for the readers' market in Germany. This interest in the essay as a literary genre, together with the growing popularity in Germany of women's critical literature, put Rosa Mayreder's "kleinen zierlichen Band," Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit, on the market.

Two decades later Otto Doderer was again to call the essay a "Fremdkörper in der deutschen Literatur," while more recent critiques appear much less pessimistic about the essay's success as a genre. Whatever the case may be, the turn of the century saw a substantial increase in the number of essay collections published, and Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit was one of them. As a prime example of "feminist essayism" it designates a common denominator for many women writers of the era. And, as Hanna Schnedl maintains, it took on the character of a "Gegeninstitution. . . , die . . . sich allgemeine Anerkennung zu Verschaffen versucht."³² The key expression here is "Gegeninstitution," or "counter-institution," though not exclusively in the

³¹ Rohner 118.

³² Schnedl-Bubenicek, "Grenzgängerin," 180.

connection alluded to here. Schnedl refers to feminist essayism as a "Gegeninstitution" to the institutions of science and education, a counter-institution to the systematization that, according to Adorno, subordinates all ideas to the supra-concept "system." It should not be forgotten, however, that the publishing industry and its monopolization by men constituted as much a threat to the advancement of women as did the system's restrictions on women's rights and women's university education, the latter of which had been greatly loosened by the year 1905.³³

It was against this backdrop that Rosa Mayreder first published a collection of her essays, discursive compositions whose roots lay as far back as her childhood and whose themes had been dealt with in her journal and newspaper articles published years before the collection went to press.³⁴ In her diary entry of

³³ Women had been allowed general entrance to the university in 1900. In some disciplines they had been admitted as regular students since long before that. See Erika Weinzierl, Emanzipation? Österreichische Frauen im 20. Jahrhundert (Wien: Böhlau, 1975).

³⁴ Among the articles published between 1899 and 1903 are the following: "Frauenvereine," Dokumente der Frauen I (1899) 36-38; "Zur Physiologie des weiblichen Geschlechts," Dokumente der Frauen I (1899) 66-69; "Die schöne Weiblichkeit," Dokumente der Frauen I (1899) 119-125; "Familienliteratur," Dokumente der Frauen II (1900) 543-550 [KdW 126-133]; "Frauen und Frauentypen," Die Frau. Monatsschrift für das gesamte Frauenleben unserer Zeit VIII (1901) 577-585 [KdW 107-125]; "Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit," Neues Frauenleben XIV (1902), Nr.1, 1-5, Nr.2, 1-5, Nr.3, 1-6 [This title

August 20, 1905, which in reference to Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit lays claim to her right to express her own subjective experiences, there are elements seemingly contradictory to statements already made concerning Mayreder's stance on the "Empfindsamkeit der Wiener Moderne:"

Ich leugnete die Möglichkeit objektiver Erkenntnisse. . . , und sagte, mein Buch sei ein Bekenntnis wie alle solche Bücher; darin bestehe sein größter Wert, denn auch ich sei eine Realität, ja mein Wesen und meine subjektiven Erfahrungen seien für mich das einzige sichere Wissen von der Welt." (D Aug. 20, 1905)

Mayreder's justification of subjective experience in this sense does not put her on the same level with the "Jung Wiener" of the Bahr circle. The "Jung Wiener," whose "subjektive Wahrheit" bordered on the mystical, denied objective, empirical experience any role in the creation of a new truth. Mayreder's "subjectivity," as Hanna Schnedl points out, becomes a tool with which she illuminates discrepancies in the ranks of generally accepted "objective" institutions:

Dem Objektivitätsanspruch der universären Organisation . . . setzt sie [Mayreder] den scheinbar bescheidenen Anspruch auf Subjektivität in ihren literarischen und essayistischen Arbeiten gegenüber, kehrt ihn jedoch

—
was then used for the first collection]; "Die Tyrannei der Norm," Die Frau IX (1902) 705-713 [KdW 59-69]; "Das subjektive Geschlechtsidol," Die Frau XI (1903), 129-137 [KdW 134-144].

schließlich um zur Kritik am offiziellen Wissenschaftsbetrieb, indem sie . . . an sämtlichen sich objektiv gerierenden Philosophen die Widersprüchlichkeit von subjektiven Spielereien diagnostiziert.³⁵

Examples of this criticism are often found in Mayreder's attacks on official state, educational, or scientifically oriented institutions in connection with the suppression and sublimation of eros. According to Mayreder, this suppression generally results in an aestheticism which she considers nothing short of a contrived repression of personal freedom. And though she does not openly attack sublimation as a symptom of repressive political and cultural mechanisms in the novellas and novels, her early fiction frequently supports the critical views. Where the early novellas and novels seem to fall short of this critical stance lies within the somewhat conciliatory mode that her protagonists often display, a mode "dessen versöhnlicher Schein weitaus gefährlicher ist als die offene Misygnie."³⁶ This conciliation is not found in the essays, where Mayreder appears fully aware of the internalization of masculine projections and does not affirm the feminine perspective as the only corrective necessary to bring about change.

³⁵ Schnedl-Bubenicek, "Grenzgängerin," 180.

³⁶ Bovenschen 20.

Mayreder's essays are, indeed, of a critical nature, yet they seem most often to fall into the category of what Graham Good terms the "moral essay":

The moral essay, although it takes on major as well as minor issues of human life and society, is quite sharply distinguished from the systematic coherence and consistency one would expect from a study in ethics. In fact the topic of the essay is often human inconsistency, as if to acknowledge those parts of human behavior which escape from systems and values.³⁷

The individual presentation of her ideas, reflected in the rhythmic quality of her style, has one purpose in mind: to expose the pseudo-culture of modern mass society and to demonstrate the monopoly of science over cognition. The introductory essay of the first collection demonstrates these two goals clearly: by reiterating the scientifically accepted forms of misogyny, Mayreder delivers an unmythified account of the manifold images of women, an account which, produced within the limits of her personal experience, is devoid of the mysticism inherent in modern scientific institutions. The titles alone--"Mutterschaft und doppelte Moral" and "Die Tyrannei der Norm" serve here as examples--indicate Mayreder's rejection of the unconscious mystification of women and of discourse about women. As an independent observer, she communicates her observa-

³⁷ Good xii.

tions, nevertheless avoiding the rigidity of doctrine: "In Dingen der Weiblichkeit werden Geschmacksfragen zu Prinzipien gemacht. Es ist ganz müßig, darüber zu debattieren, welche Art der Weiblichkeit die echte und rechte sei" (KdW 125). She defines and redefines and in doing so negates the organizing structures of academic knowledge.

What Adorno refers to in his work, "Der Essay als Form," as the paradox of futility--the fact that the essay avoids systematization's claim to consciously ordered dominance and hierarchy, while its own "unmethodical method"³⁸ attempts to create what the system only pretends--this paradox inherent in the essay was suited to Rosa Mayreder's expression of a phenomenon so contrary to every social and historical probability that it would be forced to prove itself again and again. Her essays attempt to recreate a history of real women where no history exists. Every object, every element must be defined and clarified by her own personal experience, only to be redefined through the juxtaposition of those definitions of femininity to those which have been cycled by the whims of patriarchal dominance. Like Plato's dialogues, her essays

³⁸ Kauffmann refers to Walter Pater's work Plato and Platonism (London: MacMillan, 1912), in which Pater first uses the expression.

"cut a circuitous path, approaching the truth obliquely, acknowledging the role of contingency and occasion."³⁹ Their wisdom is not abstractable from the moment, just as the images of women throughout the history of Western civilization have not been abstractable from a given period of socialization. Their truths are personal and provisional, but their moment of reciprocal identification, that point at which the object of her discussion becomes redefined by her personal experience and in turn sharpens her sense of self, this identification is recorded and shared by others without becoming incorporated into a collective enterprise. Mayreder's essays, like those of the modern critical-philosophical category, defy any philosophical system:

Instead of bowing to philosophical systems, the essay--if one may adopt Adorno's device of personifying the genre to characterize the tacit aims of its practitioners--refuses to subordinate its own method to norms handed down from above. It flouts the imperialism of scientific method, while trespassing over the boundaries of the academic disciplines.⁴⁰

What differentiates Mayreder's essays, however, from those of her male contemporaries or of male essayists since the turn of the century is the object of her argumentation. Where Adorno saw the essay "as a method

³⁹ Kauffmann 70.

⁴⁰ Kauffmann 74.

of philosophical interpretation based on the dialectical encounter between thinking subjects and concrete historical phenomena,"⁴¹ Mayreder had no concrete historical phenomena upon which to build her interpretation. She was forced to deal with the contrived images of women in Western patriarchal society, juxtaposing the negatives of those images to those of her own experience, creating a history where no "concrete" evidence existed. Unlike the "negative dialectics, or dialectics without a synthesis," which in Adorno's definition of the essay is equated with "anti-method,"⁴² Mayreder's "feministic" essayism tries to synthesize an image that must be defined and redefined until the "history of silence" is broken. It is not without a synthesis, but becomes instead a process of re-synthesizing.

Mayreder was not the first western woman to attack academic institutions. Her critical thought on the scholastic logic of argumentation, on society's repressive mechanisms and on the suppression of women in general was preceded by the works of other European women, many of whom wrote philosophical treatises and essays of similar scope, many of whose works have become a

⁴¹ Kauffmann 78.

⁴² Kauffmann 79.

part of the canon of feminist literature. Mary Wollstonecraft, whose manifest, A Vindication of the Rights of Women, was published in England in the year 1792, and Hedwig Dohm, most of whose works were published in the late 19th century,⁴³ both suggest the connection between sexuality and changing cultural norms. Mayreder is certain to have known of the two. But neither one is mentioned in her diaries or in the early essays, which suggests that she had probably not read them. That Mary Wollstonecraft's biting critiques and vigorous sentences of agitation could scarcely have made it past the Metternich censors until relatively late in the nineteenth century would still not explain why Mayreder obviously did not know the works of her German contemporary, Hedwig Dohm.

The question of why Mayreder had not read the works of Wollstonecraft and Dohm (or does not mention them) will have to go unanswered. That many of the topics in her early essays and philosophical works echo those of these two earlier writers, may simply be a coincidence. In the essays, "Die Tyrannei der Norm" and "Das Weib (as) Dame" (KdW), Mayreder points out the influence exerted over women by norms constructed by

⁴³ A selection of Dohm's "Streitschriften" have been published in Ala-Verlag in Neunkirch, Switzerland and in Verlag Arndtstraße in Frankfurt.

men in a patriarchal society, norms she sees as being in essence expressions of male sexuality, just as images of the female ideal are male fantasies to which real women are coerced to conform. She anticipates the modern feminist's view of male sexual dominance three-quarters of a century later. In Mayreder's opinion, improvements in women's condition would go hand in hand with developments in cultural norms, that is, with changes in male sexuality. Such developments she considered to be already perceptible and indeed one of the most important roots of the women's movement. It is the investigation of these social and cultural changes presented in the first volume of essays (essays that had in part already been published separately) that provides the starting point for Mayreder's cultural philosophy and constitutes the first phase of her discussion.

The style and form of Mayreder's "weiblichen Essayismus" are steeped in the romantic tradition of "des kombinatorischen Witzes," the circumlocution of a single thought.⁴⁴ Unlike the impressionists, who denied the object full analysis in order to grant the

⁴⁴ Schnedl-Bubenicek, "Grenzgängerin," 180. In connection with essayism of the German Romanticism Bovenschen quotes Inge Hoffmann-Axthelm, "Geisterfamilien". Studien zur Geselligkeit der Frühromantik (Frankfurt/Main: 1973) 155 ff.

"process" their undivided attention, Mayreder devotes her efforts to the illumination of her topics from numerous perspectives, so as to add emphasis to her own arguments. For Mayreder the analysis of the object becomes the central focus, just as it was perceived by Friedrich Schlegel: "Die Gegenstände des Essays - Individuen - Facta, Labyrinth die nun ganz analysirt werden können."⁴⁵ The tone of her essays does not even approach the gossip-like innuendos of the feuilleton that had become so popular in late nineteenth century Vienna. Unlike the feuilletonists of the period, she is unquestionably seeking the truth and in so doing avoids the loaded humor and polemicization typical of feuilletonistic writing. The vitality of her expression coincides with a further definition from Schlegel's works: "Der Essay ist ein wechselseitiger Galvanismus des Autors und des Lesers und auch ein innerer für jeden allein; systematischer Wechsel zwischen Lähmung und Zuckung. -- Er soll Motion machen, gegen die geistige Gicht ankämpfen, die Agilität befördern."⁴⁶ The gout-like mental incapacities of

⁴⁵ Friedrich Schlegel, (IV) Phil. Fragmente, zweite Epoche I (318), in Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe, ed. E. Behler, Bd. XVIII (Munich: Schöningh, 1962) 221.

⁴⁶ Schlegel 221.

Viennese society that Mayreder most successfully attacked were those symptoms brought on by the misogynist tirades of such philosophers, psychologists and scientists as Virchow, Lombroso, and Havelock Ellis, men who wrote ludicrously about alleged physiological and psychological weaknesses of women (for example, women's dependency upon the ovary for all things considered feminine and womanly), works that were well received by a majority of the Viennese bourgeoisie public. As we shall see in the further discussion of the non-fictional works, Mayreder's interest in the history of ideas and of women's psychology within that history provided her with the necessary background for a knowledgeable presentation of all the generalizations and "objective realities" surrounding the accepted myths of femininity. The "reciprocal galvanism" of author and reader--and, as we have seen, of subject and object--which even her earlier essays attained, is reflected in the fact that her first collection of essays was in its second edition within one year and within the same span of time had been translated into English, Swedish and Czech.

It is with this spirit and vitality that Mayreder's essayism concentrates on the issue of women's images and the hypotheses of feminine nature. Scattered throughout this first volume of philosophical

studies are numerous praises of the women's movement and its contribution to her work:

Ich habe mich in diesem Buch nach meiner Weise mit den Problemen der Frauenbewegung beschäftigt. Wenn ich auch in einigen Punkten nicht mit ihr übereinstimme, so halte ich doch die Frauenbewegung für eine jener Erscheinungen, durch welche sich die Gegenwart von allen vorhergehenden Epochen menschlicher Geschichte vorteilhaft unterscheidet.⁴⁷

However, Mayreder's endeavors, as well as those of the women's movement in general, met with particularly hostile opposition in Austria. One of the most limiting factors in the advancement of women's rights was the prevailing Austrian version of double morality that strongly emphasized polarity of the sexes as separate spheres ordained by nature.⁴⁸ The strong Catholic and clerical element, state authoritarianism, a largely rural and conservative population and, ironically, a Civil Law Code (1812) that gave women certain rights denied them in other European countries--all these factors contributed to the unfavorable circumstances.

Above all, the civil rights already granted

⁴⁷ Rosa Mayreder, Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit (Jena: Diederichs, 1905) 14. This quote is taken from the original introduction, which was not included in the Schnedl edition.

⁴⁸ See Stephan Zweig, Die Welt von Gestern, where the polarity of the sexes constitutes much of the discussion.

women--the rights to take up employment without the husband's permission and to administer their own property, rarely recognized rights that were all remnants of Josephinism--proved to be detrimental to the immediate formation of the women's movement. Along with the rapid growth of apolitical organizations such as the "Wiener Frauenerwerbsverein," which pressed for paid employment for women in order to alleviate middle-class economic hardship--these factors more than anything else provided a new set of limitations which tied a woman more firmly to the traditional female sphere. Analogous to Michael Foucault's "discourse of sexus," these organizations and measures sought to control, not to liberate. The 1867 Law of Assembly which banned women from joining or forming political associations without the sponsorship of male organizations is characteristic of the underlying intentions of such institutions.

The early constraints on women's education were similar. When Marianne Hainisch (later the Austrian representative at the meeting of the International Council of Women in London in 1899) called for the introduction of a girls' grammar school in 1870, her plea was rejected as being too radical. It was not until 1892 that the first private grammar school for girls was founded in Vienna. At that time women were

still barred from the university as regular students. By 1900 the Faculty of Arts was open to women, but they were not allowed to study at the Law School or at the Technical University until after the first World War, and then only because there were no longer enough men to meet the demand for trained employees.

The results of these constraints have become evident over the years. It is part of the tradition of the advancement of women in Austria that they, like the liberalists, have often won their battles by default. Or so it was until the year 1888 when the voting right that had been granted propertied women in Lower Austria was withdrawn. This was the beginning of the political agitation which in turn lead to the founding of the "Allgemeinen Österreichischen Frauenverein" by its first members Auguste Fickert, Marie Schwarz and Rosa Mayreder. The Association's goal, summed up in the yearly report of 1895, undoubtedly owes its formulation to Mayreder.

Unser Ziel ist . . . nicht die Zuerkennung von Rechten, sondern die Hebung unseres intellektuellen und sittlichen Niveaus, die Entfaltung unserer Persönlichkeit. Reicher werden in uns wollen wir, diesen Reichtum mit geliebten Menschen teilend, dadurch auch glücklicher zu sein vermögen.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ III. Jahresbericht des Allgemeinen Österreichischen Frauenvereines (1895) 7.

This statement echoes Mayreder's life-long commitment to a qualitative change in the relationship between the sexes that is evident throughout her works. But it also reflects the need to qualify and justify the political intent (or lack of it) of the Association's activities. The tendencies of the Association towards Social Democracy are mirrored in its extension of the "Brot- und Bildungsfrage" to wider social issues such as prostitution, or inheritance. The organization's "Sprachrohr," the journal Dokumente der Frauen, also founded by the first three members, served as a forum for Mayreder's initial comments on the women's movement, many of which were later incorporated into her work, Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit.⁵⁰

But over the years Mayreder's commitment changed. Though she was initially enthusiastic towards the women's movement, her interest in the journal and in the Association soon waned. She felt that the various factions in both hindered reforms to male familial privileges and the institution of the family. Issues such as the right of illegitimate children to inheritance--a question to which Mayreder repeatedly alludes

⁵⁰ For details of Dokumente der Frauen see Emma Kancler, "Die österreichische Frauenbewegung und ihre Presse: Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des ersten Weltkrieges," diss., U. of Vienna, 1947, 45-57.

in her fiction--remains a question for which she, too, fails to find any solution outside the sphere of moral obligation.

It is in her letters to Auguste Fickert in the years 1894-5 that Rosa Mayreder's ambivalence towards the women's movement in Austria and its propagation of an anti-masculine, Christian ascetic ideology of female moral superiority becomes clear:

Wenn aber diese beklagenswerthe Temperamentschwäche sich als 'Tugend' aufspielt, als Geistigkeit, als Überlegenheit über das 'Thierische' - da wird sie zur unerträglichsten Aufgeblasenheit und Selbstverblendung . . . aber es wäre traurig, wenn die Frauenbewegung in dieser Hinsicht das Erbe der christlich-asketischen Weltanschauung verträte.⁵¹

Mayreder began to refuse her support for demands she could not wholeheartedly endorse. For example, she rejected the suffrage campaign as merely ineffective agitation for a secondary goal,⁵² an attitude that is a reflection on the impotence of political affairs in Austria in general. She abhorred the abstinence movement in which many feminists participated:

In meinen Augen ist sie [the abstinence movement] ein Attentat auf die persönliche Frei-

⁵¹ Letter to Fickert, Oct. 15, 1895, I.N. 70889/13. All letters from Mayreder cited are in the "Wiener Stadt- und Landesbibliothek," manuscripts department, unless otherwise stated. Hereafter indicated by "L" followed by the date and inventory number.

⁵² L, March 19, 1899, I.N. 70891/5.

heit, das unfreiwillige Zugeständnis, daß der Mensch, wenn ihm nicht die Hände gebunden werden, eine sinnlose Bestie ist. Und ich sehe in ihr ein hassenswertes Symptom dafür, was dem Freien und Selbstständigen droht, wenn die weiteren Konsequenzen der demokratischen Kultur gezogen werden.⁵³

Indeed, for Mayreder the bourgeois women's movement was not to be seen as primarily a response to economic and social change, but as a movement with above all an ideological driving force:

Wenn ich auch keineswegs verkenne, daß ohne die ungeheure wirtschaftliche Umwälzung, die durch die Maschine hervorgerufen wurden, die ideellen Forderungen der Frauenbewegung schwerlich eine Verwirklichung erfahren könnten, so lege ich doch ein besonderes Gewicht darauf, daß es nicht die materielle sondern die ideelle Seite der Frage war, die historisch ihren Ausgang gebildet hat; und wie hoch man auch praktisch den Einfluß ökonomischer Momente bewerten muß, die ideellen Postulate der Frauenbewegung sind doch ihr wichtigster Bestandteil.⁵⁴

Mayreder's work should be examined not primarily as a direct contribution to the agitation of women's associations, but rather as a contribution both to the ideology of the women's movement and to the development of the essay. Mayreder recognized this fact only later, for in the introduction to her first volume of essays

⁵³ L to Fickert of Jan. 5, 1901, I.N. 70893/3.

⁵⁴ Rosa Mayreder, Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit (Jena: Dieterichs, 1905) 16. This quote is from the original introduction which was not published in Hanna Schnedl's 1981 edition.

she very strongly emphasizes the political and social aspects of the movement. It would seem that Viennese society's disapproval of the movement may with time have intimidated her. She praised the women's movement for having broken with the generalizations about the nature of "das Weib." In fact, she saw it as one of the greatest achievements of the movement that it cast a skeptical light on all such generalizations:

Die Frauenbewegung steht, soweit sie ganz konsequent ist, dem Begriffe der Weiblichkeit gegenüber auf einem skeptischen, wenn nicht völlig negativen Standpunkt; sie bezweifelt oder bekämpft den normativen Wert dieses Begriffes und setzt an seine Stelle die unbeschränkte Freiheit der individuellen Entwicklung. (KdW 39)

In her battle against the generalizations and images of femininity that had shaped man's image of woman and woman's image of herself, Mayreder chose to fight the proliferation of the unrealistic portrayal of women and not simply to attack social injustices which resulted from such proliferation. Much like Hedwig Dohm before her, whose polemic "Streitgespräche" had severely curtailed the ambitions of psychologists and other "experts" who professed to study the size of a woman's brain and its "deficiencies," Rosa Mayreder chose to ridicule authors like Swift, Nietzsche and Havelock Ellis, whose theories contradicted one another and resulted in the creation of a sinister fantasy being:

Wer in die Literatur über 'das Weib' eingeht, empfängt aus diesen Widersprüchen den barocken Eindruck, daß die eine Hälfte der Menschheit, zum Gegenstand der Erkenntnis gemacht, etwas Unbekanntes, Dunkles, Rätzelhaftes ist, daß Wesen, die in der vollen Realität des Lebens gegenwärtig sind, die kraft ihrer natürlichen Aufgaben den gleichen Platz wie der männliche Teil einnehmen, als Fabeltiere behandelt werden, über die man sich Ammenmärchen und Legenden erzählt. (KdW 36)

This quote from the first chapter of Hanna Schnedl's edition of Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit, a chapter entitled "Grundzüge" in which Mayreder lists the theories of the leading philosophers as to the attributes of women, contains more far-sighted criticism of Western European culture than first meets the eye. Woman, according to renowned psychologists and philosophers she quotes in the essay, has been made the "object of man's scrutiny," reduced to a "creature governed by the ovary," a creature "ruled by conservative tendencies," unjust and "half-criminal" in her very being, a "missionary of civilization," but a creature "unable to distinguish right from wrong." The list of contradictions is long. Mayreder knew the theories and ideas of many leading psychologists from all over Europe. She lists them along with some of their comments that had already gone down in the history of misogyny. What, however, remains of significance here is not Mayreder's wealth of knowledge on the subject, nor is it her ability to point out the

absurdities and contradictions. Instead, her allusion to the results of such ludicrous innuendos is of consequence: her recognition of the fact that woman remains an unknown, a dark, foreboding and puzzling creature, despite the fact that she has been made the object of so many inquiries and examinations, sets Mayreder's work apart from that of other feminists of her day and, indeed, from that of feminists until long after World War II. Mayreder sees woman as having been presented as a creature in countless "Ammenmärchen" and "Legenden," a being represented as often and in as many functions as the animals of the famous fables. Yet the "mystery" of woman's being remains unsolved.

Perhaps Mayreder's critique of some of the leading feminists of the day sheds yet more light on her position with regards to the discrepancy between the increased objectification and discussion of women on one hand, and the darkness and silence which result from this increased discourse on the other. In the essay "Frauen und Frauentypen" (KdW 107-125), Mayreder examines the theories of two contemporary feminists, Lou Andreas-Salomé and Laura Marholm, who both base their findings on physiological characteristics, but who reach very different conclusions. According to Marholm, a woman is completely dependent upon a man: "Es ist des Weibes Natur, sich in eine Form zu prägen

und nach einer Form zu verlangen, in die es sich prägen kann" (quoted from the essay, KdW 107). Salomé, on the other hand, projects an image of the self-sufficient woman, who by virtue of her creative instincts is simply more capable than a man and therefore able to participate in all aspects of life, who is also, for specifically that reason, less an individual than a man: "Das Weib ist das minder individualisierte Wesen, weil es 'noch Anteil hat an dem Alleben selbst und wie dessen persönlich gewordenes Sprachrohr wirken kann'" (KdW 109). According to Rosa Mayreder, Salomé provides an exalted version of the generalizations already provided by her male contemporaries, while Marholm takes the same to an absurd extreme. It is Marholm that Mayreder quotes in order to drive her point home: "Ihr könnt ja alles aus uns machen, Hetäre und Amazonen, Vernunftmenschen und Heilige, Gelehrte und Blödsinnige, Frauen und Jungfrauen; denn wir fügen uns jedem Druck eurer Finger, und unsere Natur ist, uns nach euch zu wandeln" (KdW 110). Laura Marholm was certainly not aware of the fact that she was wrapping up the history of Western woman in one sentence. Rosa Mayreder, however, most assuredly was: "Denn trotz der Bejahung der weiblichen Perspektive sieht Mayreder die Problematik der bloßen Wiedergabe internalisierter männlicher Projektionen durch Frauen, die auch in den

neueren Diskussionen wieder aufgegriffen wird."⁵⁵

These two essays alone--in Schnedl's edition entitled "Grundzüge" and "Frauen und Frauentypen"--contain Mayreder's most valuable contribution to the criticism of western patriarchal society and to the advancement of the women's movement. She, like other women who have broken the history of silence, may have been guilty of abstractly hypothesizing a history of femininity, at least to a certain extent. Her categories of sexual gradation, a scheme with which she attempts to explain various types of sexual behavior in men and women, show the influence of the then popular theories of gradation. And there are examples of sexual characteristics being implicitly linked to certain types of behavior, albeit only indirectly, especially in her fiction. But up to this point no woman in Austria had so clearly defined the myths of femininity and the images of women devised by society. Nor had anyone pointed out the contradiction between the elaborate framework of these myths and the void of women's role in shaping the definition of society. Says William Johnston of Rosa Mayreder, "She ranks as one of the sanest interpreters in her generation, and indeed in any generation, of the role of woman in modern

⁵⁵ Schnedl-Bubenicek, "Grenzgängerin," 181.

society."⁵⁶ What he might have said is that she is the first interpreter of her time to question the lack of woman's role in society and to point out the myriad images that man has devised in order to "keep women in their place."

In the essay entitled "Familienliteratur" Mayreder also demonstrates how the generalizations that have become norms can be perpetuated.

Niemals noch ist die herrschende Vorstellung vom Weibe, das 'Ideal' des Weibes, so sehr versimpelt gewesen wie im 19. Jahrhundert. Um den vollen Umfang dieser Versimplung zu begreifen, muß man das Bild der Weiblichkeit in jener Literatur suchen, die eigens für die Frauen geschrieben wird. Denn das ist die fragwürdige Auszeichnung unserer Zeit vor anderen Kulturepochen: es gibt eine Literatur eigens für Frauen. (KdW 126)

Here Mayreder may be ahead of her time in three ways: first, she points out the absolute manifestation of the interests of masculinity. The fact that there is literature for women is analogous to putting a woman's column in the Sunday newspaper. This "fragwürdige Auszeichnung" is a phenomenon that has only recently been questioned by the modern feminist movement. Secondly, Mayreder recognizes literature as a perpetuator of this image of woman and thereby acknowledges the fact that cultural history has preserved the images of woman,

⁵⁶ Johnston 156.

albeit without pointing out the fact that these preserved images have hidden the real women they supposedly portray. Thirdly, Mayreder alludes to the fact that the nineteenth century is different from all preceding centuries of western civilization, that the images of woman are for the first time being "catalogued" and "mail-ordered," so that women are advised in literature written especially for them as to how they are to appear, so that they have the models clearly imprinted on the brain, as Marhold would have liked to have it.

In this last point Mayreder made a slight error. It was actually the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which produced the first literature specifically for women. Silvia Bovenschen spends a major portion of the first section of her work, Die imagierte Weiblichkeit, sorting through the numerous "Wochenschriften" of the pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment periods: Christian Franz Paullini's Das Hoch- und Wohlgelahrte Teutsche Frauenzimmer from the year 1705 and Johann Christoph Gottsched's Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen of the year 1725 are among the most famous works written specifically with women as the targetted audience.

But Mayreder's error is, indeed, only a slight one, inasmuch as she, as early as the turn of the century, had correctly recognized the nineteenth

century as being extravagant in its display and perpetuation of the images of women. The vast array of literary ideas and concepts concerning the images of women is paralleled only by portraits and images of women in the visual arts--most recently and thoroughly researched by Bram Dijkstra in his work, Idols of Perversity. Dijkstra's panorama of the nineteenth century's social paranoia concerning women records a "veritable iconography of misogyny,"⁵⁷ a nineteenth century mythology, in which the "worldly success of the male was deemed to be inextricably intertwined with the self-denial of the woman."⁵⁸ The functional marginalization of the woman as the keeper of her husband's soul, as the sole keeper of man's virtue, as the resident household nun--these are but a few examples of the icons of virtuous femininity, that left the autonomous woman in a realm of suspicion.

In her essay "Familienliteratur" Mayreder surveys the role of women as part of the literary audience. According to Mayreder, women of the Golden Age of Greek literature, though they themselves had no part in the writing or performance of Greek drama, were recorded in such art as individuals, especially where the images of

⁵⁷ Dijkstra viii.

⁵⁸ Dijkstra 20.

goddesses are concerned. In the Middle Ages, she goes on, women became the intended audience of secular literature, though they had little influence on content or representation. Here, again, Mayreder maintains that women were portrayed as individuals, as figures that upheld an identity far from what more recent literature considered the "ideals of true womanhood." According to Mayreder, the need to portray an ideal image of woman is "erst eine Schöpfung der Gegenwart": "Zwar beklagte sich schon Goethe bei Eckermann über den Einfluß, den die Anwesenheit der jungen Mädchen im Theater auf die Bühne ausübe; aber seither ist dieser Einfluß ungemessen ins Breite gewachsen" (KdW 126).

That women have been the central theme of western literature since the Middle Ages--"eine schier unerschöpfliche Quelle künstlerischer Kreativität,"⁵⁹ "Trägerinnen der hohen Bildung und über die Geistlichen hinaus die Trägerinnen der schönen Sitte und edlen Geselligkeit" (KdW 126)--seems to satisfy Mayreder to the extent that she does not question the vastness of material written about imagined women and its diametrical opposition to the void of historical data about actual women, at least with regard to the centuries before the "Aufklärung." The fact that "Kriemhilde

⁵⁹ Bovenschen 11.

oder Isolde oder the Frauen des französischen Karl-epos" (KdW 126) constituted representations of women as individuals obscures the invention of such figures as devised myths, an invention which Mayreder considers an outgrowth of modern socialization, "eine Schöpfung der Gegenwart," not so much an invention of patriarchal society in general.

At the same time, Mayreder alludes to a linear development in the history of women's images (the same development that Silvia Bovenschen examines some eighty years later), a negative development in which the portrayal of women in Western civilization has become progressively more stereotyped. The argumentation is based solely on her perception of the individual character of the images involved and only peripherally, if at all, reflects insight into the economic and sociological trends which might have motivated such stereotyping, trends which Bovenschen takes into account and which will be discussed more fully in the next chapter. Of consequence for Mayreder's time, however, is the juxtaposition of this perceived linear development with the idea that women have become the the target audience of worldly literature. Says Mayreder, whereas "das weibliche Geschlecht" did not exist as literary audience until after the fall of the Roman Empire, women became "fast ausschließlich das

Publikum der weltlichen Dichtkunst" in the Middle Ages. Without drawing conclusions, she touches upon a basic concept of feminist literary criticism of the twentieth century: that patriarchal society, through the expansion of discourse, has provided the stereotype necessary to confine and contain half the population of the Western world. Mayreder views her world as the apex of this increase in discourse, distinguished from other cultural epochs in the existence of a literature "eigens für Frauen."

It is within this "Familienliteratur" that Mayreder finds the most marked perpetuation of those generalizations on women that function as implicit norms. This sentimental "Backfisch-literatur" is made available to the adolescent girl to keep her in enforced ignorance, an "ausgestopfte Puppe" (KdW 128), whose reading revolves solely around love and courtship but dishonestly refrains from depicting the realities of married life, its recipient's "profession." The object of such literature is clear:

Ein Typus soll gezüchtet werden; diesem Typus wird das einzelne Individuum unbedingt untergeordnet. Seine übrigen persönlichen Lebensinteressen dürfen nicht aufkommen, sie müssen sich einem höheren Zweck beugen. Das ist die Eignung für den Heiratsmarkt und die Tradition der schönen Weiblichkeit. (KdW 132)

Mayreder equates the censorship of such literature to a type of terrorism that has infiltrated both discursive

and creative production of the nineteenth century, but has most decisively influenced fiction, "denn sie [fiction] hat in erster Linie die geistige Verproviantisierung des Familientisches zu besorgen:"

Die Welt, wie sie hier dargestellt werden muß, ist von einer chinesischen Mauer eingeschlossen, innerhalb welcher die Vorgänge sich nach festgesetzten Regeln abspielen, sie ist eine Puppenbühne, auf der eine Anzahl stereotyper Figuren und Gedanken in ewig wiederholten Variationen die fable convenue aufzuführen, die für den Familientisch das menschliche Leben und Treiben repräsentiert. (KdW 127)

In order to support her critique of censorship and terrorism, Mayreder quotes an article in the journal Zukunft, published in November 1898 under the title "Schriftstellerleiden." According to its author, Arthur Zapp, creative literary production of the nineteenth century had been robbed of its autonomy, a fact which in turn had rendered writers "Fabrikanten von Familienblattromanen" (KdW 127). Cited in the article are letters from leading publishers of magazines, whose circulation figures reached the hundreds of thousands. One of these publishers lays out a program of rules according to which potential publications are to be judged:

Unser Unternehmen ist für den Familienkreis bestimmt, so daß wir in erster Linie auf strenge Dezenz Gewicht legen müssen und auf absolutes Vermeiden alles politisch und konfessionell Anstößigen. Auch soll auf äußerlich ereignisreiche, immer in Spannung erhaltende Handlung und knappe Darstellung

Bedacht genommen und ermüdende Schilderungen sowie Reflexionen vermieden werden. Unerlässlich ist auch ein befriedigender Schluß der Erzählung..." (KdW 128)

Mayreder interprets this encroachment upon the autonomy of the artist as an attempt at rational legitimation of a certain kind of male constitution and a construction which furthermore implies that any deviation, any assertion of individuality, is degenerate.⁶⁰ Thus, she firmly opposes those social norms which deny women self-determination and is undeniably aware of the social institutions and forces which propagate the norms she opposes. And though she affirms every autonomous gesture of opposition to those norms, she remains conscious of the fact that they constitute a deeply rooted cultural control mechanism whose grip will not easily be loosened.

Wer sich von den Normen der Weiblichkeit unabhängig macht, hat sie nicht zugleich aufgehoben. Wenn auch mit sehr wandelbaren Grenzen, wenn auch als ganz veränderliche Gebilde -- sie sind doch ein wesentlicher Bestandteil im geistigen Leben der Menschheit, sie sind das Produkt einer langen Entwicklungsreihe, einer nicht zu unterschätzenden Kulturarbeit. (KdW, the original, p. 14)

However, the origins of these generalizations and

⁶⁰ In the original collection of essays published in 1906, Mayreder cites Fichte's Grundlage des Naturrechts (1796) as a prime example of such a constitution. The essay in question, "Der Kanon der schönen Weiblichkeit," is not included in the Schnedl edition of 1981.

fantasized images of woman, the sources of this "product of cultural development," are wholly neglected in Mayreder's writings. She may label the nineteenth century as the beginning of an epoch with "fragwürdige[r] Auszeichnung," but she draws no conclusions as to the import of developments in the preceding century and their possible role in the creation of these sexist constructions. This would have meant questioning the very core of her existence. Her basic beliefs in the postulates of the Enlightenment and of humanism, beliefs upon which she bases her entire life's work, preclude any negative interpretation of the eighteenth century's philosophy of reason and individuality. The Enlightenment's campaign for religious tolerance and self-determination as well as its general negation of church dogma--a negation upon which Mayreder bases her anti-clerical attitudes--are as much a part of her work as the belief in the goodness of human nature and the faith that all men and women are capable of learning and willing to sustain the ideals of justice and liberty for all.

Rosa Mayreder was able to uncover the circumstances of cultural generalizations and the resulting images of woman that had become models for the women of her day, but she was not successful in driving these circumstances to their necessary conclusion. She was

quick to refute the reductionist theories of her day.⁶¹ She ridiculed Rudolf Virchow's then notorious dictum that femininity is merely a dependency of the ovaries, yet she overlooked the fact that an explanation of masculinity and femininity with theories of cell metabolism (anabolism and catabolism) is little but a link to the traditional vision of sex characteristics. She dismissed Schopenhauer's theory in which the male is the carrier of character and will (the world's primary principle) and the female the carrier of intellect (the secondary principle). Yet she gave considerable attention to Otto Weininger's misogynist tirade, Geschlecht und Character: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung, first published in 1901, and, indeed, showed appreciation for the emancipatory potential of his methodology:

Die Bedeutung der Weiningerschen Hypothese liegt vornehmlich in dem Bemühen, eine biologische Formel für die unendliche Mannigfaltigkeit der individuellen Entwicklung zu schaffen und die Fehlentschlüsse, die sich aus der Anwendung genereller Typen ergeben, zu vermeiden. (KdW 31)

This positive assessment comes as a surprise for those who know that in the second half of his work Otto

⁶¹ She cites the conflicting theories of over twenty psychologists and philosophers, among them Havelock Ellis and Rudolf Virchow, who base their arguments on biological differences. In the essay entitled "Grundzüge" Mayreder quotes Havelock Ellis' remark that a man is a man "right into his thumbs" and a woman a woman "right down into her little toes."

Weininger denies women the possession of a soul.

That Mayreder is undeniably a product of the same society that produced the misogynist and sexual gradation theories is evident from her preoccupation with such theories and her own inclinations toward the categorization of men and women according to certain characteristics. She sets up a relatively plausible scheme of sexual differentiation and, according to William Johnston, coins "neologisms as cacophonous as those of Weininger:"

First, the acratie person, or sex-patriot, indulges unmitigated sexuality, becoming wholly like Don Juan or wholly female like Messalina; such expenditure of sexual energy Mayreder labeled centrifugal. Second, the iliastric person strives to attain sexlessness through asceticism, conserving sexual energy in the manner of Christian and Buddhist monks so as to achieve centripetal sexuality. Third, a dycrastic person is one who can achieve neither of the preceding extremes. Unable to accommodate sexuality to other activities, he flounders in whatever he undertakes. Psychoanalysis would deem him neurotic. Fourth, a synthetic person overcomes conflict between centrifugal and centripetal sexuality. Two synthetic persons who marry learn to share intellect and emotion without sacrificing sexual fulfillment.⁶²

But Mayreder often becomes entangled in the web of her own making, proclaiming the regulatory function of nature, while disclaiming or neglecting the role of

⁶² Johnston 157.

unjust social limitations.

Welche Thätigkeit ein Weib auch ergreifen mag, es kann nie seine Weiblichkeit gefährden, denn die Weiblichkeit bleibt unter allen Umständen die Eigenheit des weiblichen Körpers. . . . Deshalb ist es ganz überflüßig, die Frauen auf ihre 'Natur' zu verweisen und sie vor Versündigung dagegen zu warnen. Was gegen die Natur ist, kann sich nicht lebendig behaupten. Das Leben allein wird uns lehren können, ob die Natur mit uns ist oder nicht.⁶³

Here it is left up to nature to regulate and control what is really "natural," while social limitations are totally left out of the picture. A woman may govern her own body, but who is actually governing woman?

Similarly, Mayreder's critique of social norms, as well as of the scientific institutions which, in her opinion, perpetuate these norms, is often limited to a mere recognition of their constructions of a negative femininity. On occasion she falls into the same trap that renders the aesthetic production and theory of her contemporaries useless to the advancement of women: she mixes aesthetic categorization with sex characterization and falls short of her goal with an adulterated form of reconciliation, a zone which buffers the discrepancies of representation and absence, of women as

⁶³ Rosa Mayreder, "Zur Physiologie des weiblichen Geschlechts," Dokumente der Frauen, 1, no.3 (April 1899) 68. This essay was not part of the original collection and was never published in a collection.

objects of literature and their virtual non-existence in the shaping of historical reality. As we shall see in the section on Mayreder's novellas, sketches and novels, this reconciliation (which can also be seen in the works of Mary Wollstonecraft), seems to limit the scope of her fictional writings, apparently preventing them from reflecting the advanced position of her discursive thought.

However, Mayreder does remain essentially hostile in her view of late nineteenth Viennese culture, a fact which will become increasingly apparent with a discussion of her early non-fiction and further philosophical treatises which deal specifically with their themes. But her work does not come close to the disproportionate inconsistencies of women like Grete Meisel-Hess, whose sharp and scathing criticism of Otto Weininger anticipated that of the National Socialists some thirty years later. Not in the slightest reminiscent of the tea parties of Karoline Pichler or Josephine von Wertheimstein are Grete Meisel-Hess' tirades against the woman-haters and the so-called scientists "von gutem Ruf," whose works display an anti-feministic behavior that "in seiner extremsten Form zum direkten Haß und zur Verachtung des weiblichen Geschlechts führt." These same volumes have received acclaim for one reason, maintains Meisel-Hess: their

authors have been successful in securing "proof" for their findings in all disciplines of the sciences and transforming these findings, with the utmost diligence, into widely published "Studien für ihren vorbestimmten Zweck."⁶⁴ Meisel-Hess, Mayreder's most radical contemporary, refers to Weininger's book as "eine wahre Encyklopädie der Weiberverachtung,"⁶⁵ a work that draws upon the disciplines of botany and mathematics for "proof" of the affinity of the sexes, without, however, providing more than artificially contrived evidence. She literally drags Weininger's sexual graduation theory through the mud with accusations of his having plagiarized Nietzsche, who "schon in dem Zeitungslesen der Weiber ihre Vermännlichung und damit die 'Verhäßlichung Europas' befürchtet" (p.13). Above all, Meisel-Hess attacks Weininger's ideas on woman's lack of will and soul and his critique of the woman's movement as nonsense.

To the modern reader Weininger's theories do appear grotesque. It is as if one glances through them merely to assess a reason for their popularity during

⁶⁴ Grete Meisel-Hess, Weiberhaß und Weiberverachtung: Eine Erwiderung auf die in Dr. Otto Weiningers Buche "Geschlecht und Charakter" geäußerten Anschauungen über "Die Frau und ihre Frage" (Wien: Wage, 1904) iii.

⁶⁵ Meisel-Hess 3.

the first decades of the twentieth century (there were nineteen editions before the year 1920). Certainly one of the reasons for the work's influence is the fact that it, like many works of its time written on the social and biological perspectives of sex difference, was derived from the Darwinist creed of sex selection, according to which the adaptation of secondary characteristics is fully dependent upon the reproductive function. The myriad interpretations stem from the two major standpoints that sex psychologists maintained: either the theory was used by anti-feminists to define the characteristics according to a preconceived notion (Weininger), or it was adapted to go against the intention of its creators so as to justify a limitation of secondary characteristics to the realm of primitive sexual nature and thus to affirm qualities which are neither feminine nor masculine (Mayreder). Darwinists, on the other hand, used it for the opposite purpose of legitimating an extension of secondary characteristics as well as adding emphasis to their assumptions about femininity and its "naturalness." In this way each used "science" to serve his or her own ideology.

Weininger's work, at least the biological and psychological examination of the sexual graduation theory in the first part (simply a more developed version of the Schopenhauer theory of sexual graduation),

is far less offensive than is, say, the notorious Über den physiologischen Schwachsinn des Weibes (1901) by P.J. Möbius, in which almost all misogynist clichés are given a "scientific" foundation in the female physiology. Mayreder, for example, accepts the sexual graduation theory that Weininger meticulously purports, especially where the bisexuality of all individuals is concerned. What she does not accept is the discrepancy between the first and the second parts, in which Weininger operates with a generalized typography of masculinity and femininity and implies massive degeneration of all things feminine.

But there were other reasons for the popularity of Weininger's book. Meisel-Hess herself points out several. One factor was, of course, the suicide of the twenty-two year old author:

Obwohl der Selbstmord des jungen Philosophen diese Beachtung wesentlich erhöhte, wäre sie ihm jedenfalls auch ohne diesen tragischen Anlaß in hohem Maße zuteil geworden, schon durch seine ebenso frappierende, als für viele vielleicht verlockende Tendenz einer kaum jemals in solch maßloser Weise geäußerten Weiberverachtung, die auf einem Unterbau schwerwissenschaftlicher Theorien postiert ist.⁶⁶

According to Meisel-Hess it was certainly the death of the young author that evoked tones of great admiration

⁶⁶ Meisel-Hess iv.

from the Viennese, so much so that the unscientific methodology of the second part of his work was camouflaged by the floodlights cast on the event. In her opinion, it was only a matter of time until the Viennese audience would discover the charlatan in Weininger: "Aber gerade die Resultate, zu denen Weininger gelangte, tragen den Todeskeim in sich, während nur die Art, wie er zu ihnen gelangte, ein hochinteressantes, aufregendes, geistiges Schauspiel gewährt."⁶⁷

It was specifically "dieses hochinteressante, aufregende, geistige Schauspiel" that, in Meisel-Hess' opinion, blinded the followers of Weininger, so that they attributed the absurdities and errors in his theories to the "Delirien eines Fieberkranken!" She takes it upon herself to convert these followers by compromising Weininger's writings and exercising a point-to-point debate over the most minute innuendo, the results of which are that she finally renders herself a target of ridicule. In her global critique she delivers herself unto the wholesale judgement of Third Reich mentality, as the following comment illustrates:

Ein weiteres Merkmal, wodurch bedeutende Frauen [according to Weininger] "ihren Gehalt an Männlichkeit" offenbaren, sei der Umstand, daß ihr männliches sexuelles Komplement fast

⁶⁷ Meisel-Hess v.

nie ein "echter" Mann ist. [Comment from Meisel-Hess:] Ja, aber warum ist er es meistens nicht? Weil es deren, wie mir scheint, überhaupt nicht allzu viele gibt.

One is not surprised to learn that the same Grete Meisel-Hess, whose exaggerated Weininger critique had made the headlines of Fin-de-siècle Vienna, was later (especially after the First World War) to assert some rather abstruse ideas:

So schlug Grete Meisel-Hess allen Ernstes die "Kolonialisierung frauenarmer Länder anderer Weltteile mit dem Frauenüberschuß Europas" vor und sah darin einen wichtigen "Programmpunkt eines Systems der Sanierung des Geschlechtslebens."⁶⁸

As Hanna Schnedl points out, Rosa Mayreder never allowed the tone of her essays to approach such dogmatic, polemic argumentation. In the foreword to the first edition of her work Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit Mayreder writes: "Deshalb hat dieses Buch mehr einen Erkenntniswert als einen propagatorischen. Gegner zu überzeugen, erwarte ich nicht, denn das würde heißen, Andersgeartete zu bekehren."⁶⁹ By the time the second edition had appeared in the year 1907, Rosa Mayreder was a well-known essayist whose first collection had already been translated into three other European languages.

⁶⁸ Schnedl, introduction, KdW 29.

⁶⁹ Schnedl, introduction, KdW 23.

The essay as a literary form and the publication possibilities that attended its popularity afforded Rosa Mayreder and her contemporaries, both men and women, a means of expressing their critical opinions in an attempt to ward off the encroaching philosophy of therapeutic nihilism, and once again breathe life into the fading traditions of humanistic thought. The images of women that Rosa Mayreder projected in her non-fictional works were those of vigorous and emancipated individuals who possessed the abilities and the capabilities to control their lives in the face of patriarchal bias and injustice. While her male contemporaries portrayed women according to biological and "natural" characteristics, Mayreder was able to free herself from the Darwinist, Freudian machinations of sexual categorization. Ironically, the woman of Mayreder's philosophical writings seems to vanish in her imaginative works. This apparent discrepancy and the possible explanations involved become significant from both a scholarly and a feminist standpoint. One must pose the obvious question: why did this autodidact of the late nineteenth century project two completely different images of woman?

Chapter 3

The Early Fiction

Rosa Mayreder's first major fictional composition was the libretto of Hugo Wolf's only opera Der Corregidor after Pedro Alarcon's novella The Three-Cornered Hat.¹ Though the manuscript was ready as early as 1890, it was not until five years later that Wolf finally began the composition and the collaboration with his librettist that would develop into a lasting friendship. Unfortunately, neither the music nor the text received good reviews, so that the opera's debut at the Viennese State Opera House was cut short.²

Mayreder had more luck with her later fiction.³ Vignettes first appeared in literary magazines: the short stories "Lilith und Adam" and "Klub der Übermenschen" appeared in the Neue deutsche Rundschau under the pseudonym of Eremo;⁴ the vignette "Mit dreizehn

¹ See the bibliography of Harriet Anderson's dissertation for extensive reference to the Mayreder-Wolf collaboration. Also Dworschak's dissertation 151-240.

² Anderson 31. Anderson refers here to an article by Max Vancsa in a musical journal dated 1904, one year after Wolf's death and shortly before the legal proceedings against Wolf's relatives concerning the copyright of the piece.

³ For a comprehensive five-page bibliography of all of Mayreder's publications, see Rosa Mayreder: Tagebücher 1873-1937, ed. with intro. Harriet Anderson (Frankfurt: Insel, 1988) 319-323.

⁴ "Eremo" is the first person of a Greek verb

Jahren" appeared in the Neue Revue.⁵ However, the first full-length imaginative work was not published until 1896 under the title Aus meiner Jugend: Drei Novellen.⁶ This volume was followed by the 1897 collection of vignettes called Übergänge and a mystery Diana und Herodias: Ein mysthisches Spiel of the same year, which, however, was not published until 1937, and then only privately. Of central importance for the present study are the first collections of novellas and vignettes and the two novels of the period, Idole: Geschichte einer Liebe⁷ and Pipin: Ein Sommererlebnis.⁸

Mayreder, who was never quite convinced of her own abilities as a writer of fictional literature, must have been surprised at the immediate success of her first accomplishments. Both her autobiographical novels were well received by the sympathizers of the women's movement. Two statements brought to light in

which means to stand alone.

⁵ See "Eremo," "Lilith und Adam," Neue deutsche Rundschau, 5, no. 1/2 (1894): 264-277; "Der Klub der Übermenschen," Neue deutsche Rundschau, 6, no. 3/4 (1895): 1212-1228; "Mit dreizehn Jahren," Neue Revue, 7, no.1 (Jan.-June 1896): 83-87; 117-122.

⁶ Dresden: Pierson, 1896; Vienna: Heller, 1908.

⁷ Berlin: Fischer, 1899.

⁸ Vienna: Heller, 1903; second edition 1908.

Anderson's dissertation are worth mentioning. She quotes Egid von Filek, who claimed of Idole that it was "eins der inhaltreichsten Werke, die seit Jahren auf dem Gebiet der Frauenliteratur erschienen sind,"⁹ that is to say, a positive review from the editor of another women's magazine, who refers to the novel as "Frauenliteratur." Another statement comes years later from the critic Julius Kühn, who asserts of Pipin that it was "ein Roman, das seiner merkwürdig frei gehandhabten Form wegen, in der Geschichte des Romans nicht ungeachtet bleiben wird."¹⁰ Of her own work Mayreder later says in her memoirs:

Es ist übrigens bemerkenswert, daß ich es mit der Zeit dahin brachte, die Leidenschaftlichkeit in der Meinungsäußerung zu beherrschen und in meine Gewalt zu bekommen, nicht aber die Rührseligkeit. Mein ganzes Leben lang hat sie mich gehindert, meine Gefühle zu bezeigen, und mich genötigt, das Schönste, was ich im Verkehr mit anderen Menschen zu geben gehabt hätte, zu unterdrücken oder für mich zu behalten. Und wahrscheinlich war sie es auch, die meine dichterische Produktion sehr ungünstig beeinflusste, indem sie Eindrücke und Regungen in Tränen abfließen ließ, statt sie innen zu einer Stärke zu verdichten, die sich die Ausdrucksmittel dienstbar macht, um sich eine Form der Äußerung zu schaffen. (HiL 163)

⁹ Egid von Filek, "Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit," Neues Frauenleben, 17, no.11 (Nov. 1905): 1-2.

¹⁰ Julius Kühn, "Rosa Mayreder," Die Tat: Monatschrift für die Zukunft deutscher Kultur, 10, no. 9 (Nov. 1918): 699.

This control of passion of which Mayreder speaks was also praised by Havelock Ellis, who in his review of the philosophical essays Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit later commented on her sober intellectual approach and her ability to present different sides to each issue.¹¹ The second, unflattering, but objective, self-critical part of the above quote points to a phenomenon typical of the writings of many women in the 19th century who were still endeavoring to emancipate themselves from the chains of bourgeois girls' education and the "Familienliteratur" that it supported.¹² A result of these endeavors was often the discrepancy between an attempted and an actually attained representation of an emancipated heroine. Of the protagonist in Mary Wollstonecraft's first novel, Helen Moers writes:

Wollstonecraft's intention was to make an intellectual heroine, the "woman who has thinking powers;" but the thinking heroine is not the subject of the fumbling, tortured sketch of virginal sexuality that Mary, a Fiction turned out to be. Where Wollstonecraft did make a sizable contribution to imaginative literature, it was not

¹¹ Havelock Ellis, "Rosa Mayreders 'Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit,'" Neues Frauenleben, 18, no.10 (Oct. 1906): 16. Quoted in Anderson, diss. 33.

¹² For a detailed description of the education of young women, see Ingrid Belke, Die sozialreformato- rischen Ideen von Josef Popper-Lynkeus (1838-1921) im Zusammenhang mit allgemeinen Reformbestrebungen des Wiener Bürgertums um die Jahrhundertwende. Tübingen: Mohr, 1978.

with the intellectual but with the passionate heroine--the woman in love, the fully sexual being.¹³

Mayreder, unlike Wollstonecraft, was not of the misconception that her protagonists would have to represent a new intellectualization of the image of woman, a misconception which grew out of the Enlightenment's early attempts to "produce" a scholarly woman acceptable to the Age of Reason, and in so doing to ward off all past incompatible images of woman as representative of the unknown, of the devil.¹⁴ But Mayreder's portrayal of women as artificial products of culture, nurtured into a form which renders them unable to deal with reality, often appears to dissipate into the same "fumbling, tortured sketch of virginal sexuality" that Moers sees in Wollstonecraft's figure. Neither do the depictions of either of these women writers appear similar to Frank Wedekind's portrayals of Lulu,¹⁵ who represents the same artificial product of society, but who has learned to use the roles forced upon women interchangeably in order to control her environment. She changes roles and costumes at will, so that she must also

¹³ Helen Moers, Literary Women (New York: Doubleday, 1976) 124.

¹⁴ Bovenschen 80-138.

¹⁵ Erdgeist, 1895; Die Büchse der Pandora, 1902.

accept the fact that every role she will play carries its own destruction within its very definition:

Denn nur dann entgeht Natur der absoluten Vergesellschaftung, wenn in jeder gesellschaftlichen Erscheinungsform deren Negation ansichtig wird. Lulus Natur kann sich daher nur als unausgesetzte Negation der von ihr gelebten Positionen behaupten. Lulus Natur ist daher nur negativ zu bestimmen als das, was sie nicht ist.¹⁶

Lulu not only portrays the myth of womanhood, the natural form of woman before the dressage of man, but she also represents all the images conjured up by society which have become second nature to women.¹⁷ The tragedy (and her eventual demise) lies in the fact that these two elements of her personality are irreconcilable. Lulu cannot please her men and be true to herself.

In the manifold roles she plays, Frank Wedekind's Lulu-figure characterizes many of the images of women that are found in the literature of the Fin-de-siècle (the prostitute, "la femme fatale," "das süße Mädel"). Arthur Schnitzler's women-protagonists exemplify these images realistically, that is, in a life-size form that clearly depicts the roles in which society has placed

¹⁶ Wilhelm Emrich, "Frank Wedekind: Die Lulu-Tragödie," in: Protest und Verheißung (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1968) 212.

¹⁷ Bovenschen 43-59.

women. Christine, "das süße Mädel" of the drama Liebelei (first performed in Vienna in 1895), a replica of Johann Nestroy's "Mäderl aus der Vorstadt," has much in common with the virtuous female figures of bourgeois tragedies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Like Louise Miller of Kabale und Liebe, Schnitzler's Christine is the daughter of a musician who finds herself in love with a man of higher social standing. Quite apart from the earlier "bürgerlichen Tragödie," however, it is not this social standing and the crossing of social boundaries that becomes a hindrance to the lovers, but instead the inability of the figures to escape the prisons of patterned behavior into which modern society has placed them.

Christine is clearly "das Mädchen aus gutem Hause" who has been sheltered and protected by her loving father in the absence of a mother. Once again, the scenario bears a striking resemblance to the familial situation of Miß Sara Sampson or of Kabale, where the mother is either absent or displays behavior that is detrimental to the well-being of the daughter. In other words, the daughter is bereft of a role model. Christine is truly in love with Fritz, who has been using her to get over a love affair with a married woman (the husband later kills Fritz in a duel). Fritz finds Christine's company refreshing, because she is

too naive to have acquired finesse in social games and because her "natural" and "innocent" sensitivity and nurturing qualities are precisely what he needs to build his own masculine ego: he is allowed to address her as "Kind" for the duration of the piece, at least until shortly before the duel, when Christine receives him (unaware of his precarious situation) in the idyllic bourgeois setting of her little room, where they spend his last minutes together. His moments of regret come too late to save himself or Christine, who, so the audience assumes, commits suicide when she hears of Fritz' death.

Rosa Mayreder's first prose works--the only prose she composed that was recognized with second editions during her lifetime--is often a depiction of events in the lives of such "süße Mädels" types. They, like Christine, are products of nineteenth century society, of the Biedermeier Age, during which time women were as censored and constrained as literary works of the Metternich era. Many of these women were forced to stay at home to enjoy what little educational tidbits they might retrieve from behind closed doors. Any demands with regard to the rights of women would have meant a threat to the middle-class quietism and the visions of simplicity, self-restraint, awareness of social rank and position that were inherent in the cul-

ture and socialization of the first half of the nineteenth century.

Yet Schnitzler's Christine and the female protagonist of Mayreder's first novella "Der Letzte" are the children of a more "enlightened" bourgeoisie. The walls of Christine's room are hung with paintings that depict the idylls of the Biedermeier family setting (family portraits in the salon, the family in the garden). But they also boast of a little library of sorts, reminiscent of the Enlightenment ideals of the educated woman.¹⁸ Mayreder's Agnes, educated and cared for by the Widow Fiedelbaß since her mother's death at her birth, is likewise knowledgeable in the fields of botany and biology, yet sheltered until the very end from the fact that she is the illegitimate child of a prematurely aging count. Withdrawn from an active life, the count is "rescued" by a cleric from his den of resignation and forced to remedy the mistake of his youth, which had resulted in the death of the child's middle-class mother. As in the bourgeois tragedy of the eighteenth century, the constraints of class boundaries are viewed as the ultimate curse in the fate of a

¹⁸ See Bovenschen 80ff.; also: Angelika Lorenz, Das deutsche Familienbild in der Malerei des 19. Jahrhunderts (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985) 121-182.

sensitive, virtuous maiden, resulting in the late, but nevertheless corrective rejection of the social dictates of origin. The count, once too weak to fight against social prejudice, now supports the marriage of his daughter to the son of landed peasantry. It would seem that Rosa Mayreder is bound to carry on the tradition of her father as an advocate of Austrian liberalism and its endeavors to reconcile the landed gentry of a feudal society with the bourgeois elements which were rapidly gaining strength.

The novella "Der Letzte," the first of the three prose pieces in the volume Aus meiner Jugend, is an attempt at realistic depiction of a social milieu that remains two-dimensional. The character studies are superficial and unmotivated, leaving the descriptions of poverty and social abuse void of lasting expression. Yet the piece is of interest for several reasons: first, its language attests to the fact that Mayreder is at this point wholly influenced by the literary traditions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, especially to classical German literature and to early poetic realism. Her style does not yet show the influence of Nietzsche, to whom she was first introduced in 1885. She records the profound effect Nietzsche's writing had upon her own in the following excerpt from the article "Von Wagner zu Nietzsche:"

Eine neue Welt des Geistes tat sich vor mir auf. Mit hinreißendem Zauber der Sprache war darin vieles gesagt, was ich dunkel empfand, ohne es ausdrücken zu können. Und zugleich fiel das Joch der Schopenhauerischen Weltinterpretation von mir ab, das ich aus eigener Kraft nicht zu sprengen vermocht hatte. . . . Daß aber auch bei Nietzsche keine letzte Lösung der Probleme, die mich so glühend beschäftigten, zu finden war, weil im Christentum eine ganz andere Geistesmacht lag, als er sowohl wie der junge Wagner meinte - das zu erleben, blieb den späteren Jahrzehnten meines Lebens vorbehalten.¹⁹

By the time Mayreder's first novel Idole: Geschichte einer Liebe was published (1899), the influence of Nietzsche's style upon her own was evident: the epic breadth had given way to a pregnant, tightly composed semantic and syntactical vitality, that, ironically, would have been more suited to the tension and brevity of novella composition.²⁰

The second point of significance in the first novella is one of thematics that will demonstrate how close the Catholic-raised Mayreder had come to the "letzte[n] Lösung der Probleme" of her religious faith by the time the novella was published. In connection with the Saturday evening circle, a "Stammtisch" of

¹⁹ Rosa Mayreder, "Von Wagner zu Nietzsche: Ein Jugenderlebnis," Die Glocke: Wiener Blätter für Kunst und geistiges Leben, 2, no. 23/24 (Feb. 1936): 8-15.

²⁰ See Henry H. Remak, Die Novelle in der Klassik und Romantik (Wiesbaden: Athenäum, 1982) for a comprehensive definition of the novella in classic form.

artists, philosophers and editors that gathered at the Obermayer house on a regular basis, Rosa Obermayer-Mayreder was introduced to Friedrich Eckstein, philosopher and writer, and to Rudolf von Waldheim, founder of the "Kunstgewerbeverein" and editor of the Wiener Figaro. It was Waldheim who introduced Mayreder to the ideals of the Enlightenment and independent political thought.

Überhaupt ist er [Waldheim] der Einzige, der mich seit den Anfängen unserer Bekanntschaft, wo ich doch noch sehr jung war, schon mit Hochachtung und Auszeichnung behandelt hat, der mir niemals mit jener läppischen Manier, über Alles zu scherzen, begegnet ist, womit man sonst die Frauenzimmer der Gesellschaft verfolgt, der meine geistigen Bestrebungen unterstützt hat. (D Nov. 25, 1881)

It was Eckstein, however, who introduced Mayreder to the writings of Richard Wagner and his critique of Christianity in Die Kunst und die Revolution (1849). Wagner's claim that Christianity had severed man from his true being and raised him in hypocrisy corresponded with Rosa's own rejection of Christianity's dualism.²¹ Subsequent reading of Wagner led, however, to her rejection of what she considered the contradictions inherent in his works: he still praised the Christian creed of self-sacrifice and renunciation. Attempting

²¹ See Mayreder's article, "Von Wagner zu Nietzsche: Ein Jugenderlebnis."

to remedy her confusion on the matter, she turned to Schopenhauer, to whose philosophy of negation she was vehemently opposed. It was only later in her diary that she records the tremendous impact of Wagner's work on her own, though she remained skeptical of Wagner's acceptance of Christianity and its aestheticization at Beyreuth:

Richard Wagner hat mit den Schriften seiner ersten Periode die besten Instinkte meines Wesens bestätigt. Er hat formuliert und ans Licht gebracht, was unklar in meiner Tiefe lag. Daher seine ungeheure Wirkung auf mich.
(D Jan. 8, 1906)

The earlier diary entries are the clue to the fact that Mayreder was dealing with the concept of Christian dualism and its rejection in nineteenth century philosophy as early as 1881. With this fact in mind it seems contradictory to her very criticism of Christian ethics and moral codes that she would allow a cleric to maintain the position of control in the first novella "Der Letzte." For it becomes the role of the fatherly "Kanonikus" to solve the puzzles and reunite the father and daughter that have heretofore suffered under the dictates of social convention and rigid class boundaries.

This apparent contradiction is one which surfaces repeatedly throughout Mayreder's early fiction. Given the revolutionary content of the philosophical essays,

the delegation of authority to the very institution of repression that had shaped the lives of women throughout the history of Western civilization appears absurd. The cleric dons his flowing cape, races down the winding staircase of the count's mansion, rides over the landscape from one station to the other, carrying out charitable missions, patching misunderstandings and repairing relationships wherever he enters the scene. The reconciliatory mode in which the Church father rescues the depressive aristocrat, the last heir of a dying dynasty, while at the same time restoring the severed ties to the rising bourgeois ideals represented in his daughter, is reflected in the style and language of the novella. The rhythm and choice of flowing expressions are not so much reminiscent of Goethe, whose style served as a model for Mayreder (D Jan. 7, 1905) as they are of the self-restraint of Stifter's depictions of nature and the simplicity of the untiring activity of the protagonist in his novella Brigitta.

But artistic representation was not enough for Rosa Mayreder. She had already recognized that the exaltation of protagonists like Christine and Stifter's Brigitta (who, as a perfect example of such exaltation, is already dead when the piece opens) would only reinforce the aestheticization of suffering, pain and

death, a preoccupation that is reflected not only in the large number of suicides in late nineteenth century Vienna,²² but also in the widespread baroque cult of death that encompassed many facets of Viennese society. In Mayreder's opinion, such aestheticization obscured any allusion to the mendacious relationship between the sexes and rendered the so-called socially critical aspects of contemporary literary works ineffective as tools for combatting social proprieties. This does not mean that the early fictional works of Rosa Mayreder are void of aesthetic presentation. They may represent variations on the same theme: the individual against the tyranny of a society whose rules and laws are considered an encroachment upon freedom. As we have seen, however, they rarely protest social injustice in a radical manner, as is the case with the works of the outspoken contemporary of Mayreder, Grete Meisel-Hess. Mayreder's attacks against the various institutions responsible for social injustice are usually buffered with subtle irony, an example of which comes early in her career in the portrayal of the "Kanonikus," a character study that was not completely successful due to an inconsistent use of this device. Nevertheless,

²² Johnston, "Fascination with Death," 165-180.

the cleric does come across as a Goethe-Faust-Mephisto figure of the Faust I version, a tireless do-gooder who disappears up the stairway or into his coach with the flowing cape covering most of his face, leaving doubt as to his genuine motivation. His uncanny ability to be everywhere at once, to do good for all and yet to retreat in a cloud of mystical smoke at the drop of a hat are all qualities that are carefully emphasized without, however, clarifying the reconciliatory role the church father plays in reuniting aristocracy with bourgeoisie. At best his enlightened answer to the nihilism and resignation of the count is the Faustian pursuit of the liberation of human creativity.

More conspicuous than the blatant glorification of the "Kanonikus" and his role of protector and salvage master is the repression of the young girl's sexuality, quite contrary to the Mayreder ideal of individualized femininity. Agnes is constantly kept in the tutelage of either the cleric or the guardian, the Widow Fiedelbaß, whose fairy-godmother goodness bears traits of Mayreder's beloved piano teacher, Madame Campilli (HiL 143). The few times she sees the object of her affections, Gandolf, who approaches her in the garden where she is doing needlework, she seems to be protected by the mere activity in which she is engaged, making the accidental rendezvous quite acceptable to

the Witwe Fiedelbaß: namely, the guardian always appears on the scene just as Agnes lays her work aside. Here Mayreder's use of irony is much less successful than in the portrayal of the cleric, though her intentions are just as clear.

Such buffering through the use of irony is a technique that Mayreder develops throughout her early fictional works. As she becomes more and more involved in the cause for the liberation of the individual from the chains of hostile authority, especially where this results from society's determination of exactly what characterizes a woman's or a man's existence, this irony becomes more vehement and tendentious. Yet, despite the fact that the essays of the volume Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit are hopeful for change in the reigning social order, there is that slight note of what appears to be resignation throughout the earlier fictional works, a resignation which, according to some critics, renders the short prose pieces of the beginning of Mayreder's career less convincing--or perhaps only less marketable--than the novels that follow. One might pose the question, as did Harriet Anderson,²³ of

²³ Anderson, diss. 179. In her short chapter on Mayreder's fiction (178-197) Anderson speculates on the various reasons for the "discrepancies" between the fictional and non-fictional works, among the most plausible being that the non-fictional mode allowed a potentially greater freedom of expression than the

whether the intervention of the narrator necessitates an aesthetic distancing from the ideological content, resulting in a greater pessimism with which the struggle for female independence is treated in the fiction. But Anderson overlooks the one significant moment within the early fiction that refutes this argumentation: Mayreder does not succumb to the exaltation of female protagonists prescribed by her contemporaries, nor does she allow "aesthetic distancing" to deter her from depicting women's condition realistically. Instead, she relies upon poetic devices such as variation in perspective and rhythm, humor and irony, in order to create an aesthetic representation of the plight of women, whose story knows no "happy end."

One significance of the "discrepancies" in the earliest published novella of Rosa Mayreder might be that they perhaps shed light on the development and growing self-awareness of the female protagonists in

established conventions of women's fiction. She herself points out, though, that this does not explain why Mayreder's later fiction is just as pessimistic as that of the earlier years. She fails to see that Mayreder's "pessimism" is the key to breaking those established conventions. The problem cannot be reduced to what subject matter Mayreder considered appropriate for the two modes, since, as we shall see, many of the topics covered in the essays are even more intensively pursued in the novellas and novels.

her later works, and, indeed, of the young writer herself. Though Mayreder continues to depict the plight of "das süße Mädel" throughout the early fiction, her later figures do seem less apt to fall into the two-dimensional complacency that appears to find Agnes so much at home with her environment and the authorities that govern it. The first novella, reminiscent of the "Familienliteratur" that Mayreder would so brilliantly disavow in the essay collection published only a few years later, would, seen in this context, merely represent the first attempt at depicting a social milieu from which the author herself has not completely escaped.

Yet, one question arises in conjunction with this "discrepancy" in emancipatory intention, a question that is of major significance for the present study. As the preceding chapter has shown, many of the essays published in the collection of 1906 had been circulated in journals and newspapers long before the collection was issued, some of them before 1900. This would indicate that the two-dimensional complacency exhibited by the protagonists of the early fiction, and, indeed, of the later fiction as well, is not representative of a yet immature, less emancipated Rosa Mayreder. Instead, it seems that the differentiation between women of her non-fiction and those of fiction may have been inten-

tional. Certainly, one assumes that Mayreder was aware of her reading public, much too aware, in fact, to allow her protagonists the runaway spirit of the "femme fatale" in Grete Meisel-Hess' prose of the same period. Nor does she follow the patriarchal mode of exaltation prescribed by her male contemporaries. She appears, furthermore, to have been conscious of Meisel-Hess' internalization of the dictates of masculinity and of the manipulative, suggestive power of patriarchal exaltation. To have had her protagonists suffer the same fate that those of her contemporaries experienced would have meant the negation of her very commitment to the advancement of women.

What, then, is Mayreder's intent, when she portrays her protagonists as lifeless, resigned figures who have little to do with the emancipated women of the non-fiction? Why does she leave them trapped in the mire of patriarchal expectations, floundering for that glimpse of life they have never known, only to be thrust back into captivity by their own incapacities to change their plight. The answer can be found in Mayreder's definition of self-awareness, which is outlined in the essay, "Einschaltung über das imaginative Ich" (KdW 145-149). In this essay Mayreder examines the "reflecting self," the image one has of oneself, and its relationship to the image reflected by others.

Mayreder maintains that the reflecting self seldom corresponds to the real, acting and interacting person and that the only way to achieve actual self-awareness of any measureable degree is through a long process of conflict with the environment, a process in which the distance between the two levels is minimized. What usually interferes with this process is fantasy, since it hinders self-observation and provides the reflecting self with an array of desired characteristics from which to choose. The "reflecting" self becomes the "imagined" self.

Dieses phantastische Bild trägt oft kaum einen Zug der realen Person mehr an sich; bei allen Zusammenstößen mit der Wirklichkeit führt es infolgedessen zu unentwirrbaren Händeln. Solche Menschen glauben sich einer dunklen Schicksalsgewalt unterworfen; ihre Erlebnisse haben in ihren Augen etwas Unerklärliches, als wären sie durch höhere Mächte - durch die "Vorsehung" im günstigen Fall, durch dämonische im ungünstigen - geleitet, weil sie vermöge der überwiegenden Phantasie gar nicht in der Lage sind, den Abstand zwischen dem imaginativen Ich und ihrer realen Person wahrzunehmen und seine Wirkung in ihrem Leben abzuschätzen. (KdW 146)

Mayreder further maintains (in this essay as well as in the essay entitled "Familienliteratur") that the patriarchal order of Western society has provided women with the fantastic images necessary to hinder the process of self-awareness and of self-realization, images so subliminal that even the most radical initiates of women's

emancipation have failed to perceive their presence, much less combat their effects. The consequence of Mayreder's cognitive efforts is that she is no longer willing to relativize the incapacities and resignation of her protagonists. Nor does she consider the utopian representation of successful escape found in feminist fiction of her day to be an acceptable approach. Instead, she prefers to illuminate that irritating moment when her lifelike, struggling, incapacitated figures give in to the only alternative they have: resignation. By not acquiescing in the dictates of literary aesthetics prescribed by the patriarchal order, she, of course, runs the risk of not being published and of her works not being recognized as part of the literary canon. The fact that she, indeed, was published can be attributed in part to her use of poetic devices such as irony and humor and to the increasingly effective characterization of her second collection's protagonists, whose lives are vividly portrayed through a variation of perspective that rivals the skills of her contemporaries and in many cases bears qualities of the classical realistic tradition of England's Charles Dickens.

Mayreder's adherence to the classical realistic tradition is documented in the second novella of the volume Aus meiner Jugend, which addresses social prob-

lems directly. This work is more compact in composition, owing in part to the successful "Rahmenerzählung" (or narrative frame) so typical for the classic examples of the genre in poetic realism. Malvine von Elsparg, an elderly spinster aristocrat whose life has been marred by personal tragedy, presents the diary version of her life story to a young woman, the narrator. The narrative perspective alternates between the dying woman's commentary and the narrator's deciphering of the diary itself, a technique that lends the title story "Aus meiner Jugend" far more contour than did the omniscient narrator of the first novella. In using this technique Mayreder continues a tradition in women's writings since the Enlightenment that, together with the "Briefroman," forms a platform for the justification of women's literary existence since the eighteenth century.²⁴

Improvement in the narrative technique of the sec-

²⁴ See Bovenschen 200-220; also Helmuth Kiesel, Paul Münch, Gesellschaft und Literatur im 18. Jahrhundert (Munich: Beck, 1977) 180-203, cited in Bovenschen 201 as a reference for statistics on the expansion of the book market; also M.G. Nickish, "Die Frau als Briefschreiberin im Zeitalter der Aufklärung," Wolfenbütteler Studien zur Aufklärung, vol. III (Wolfenbüttel: Schneider, 1976); also Dieter Kimpel, Der Roman der Aufklärung (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977). This topic will receive more attention in the following discussion of Mayreder's second novel, a "Briefroman" entitled Pipin: Ein Sommererlebnis.

ond novella is not its only positive contribution to the development of Mayreder's fiction. Though the conflicts depicted are often without sound psychological motivation, Mayreder is more successful at portraying the mental state of the tortured figures. She captures the bourgeois mentality of her time in a far more realistic description of social convention and injustice than in the first novella. Thematically the prerequisites for more realistic portrayal may be inherent in the piece: it deals with the tragic deaths of the spinster's lover and an actress, who, in an endeavor to overcome the moral straightjacket of bourgeois sexual constraints, embark on an adventure that leads to their ruin. Their demise in a theater fire does not, however, result in the exaltation of their fate or in their reconciliation with the same, as in the eighteenth century "Trauerspiel," in which the heroine must recognize the hopelessness of her situation and, in so doing, rises (together with the lover, of course) above the level of the purely physical to enter the realm of complete independence from social convention and bonds. In other words, death in the bourgeois tragedy is glorified as a utopia in which the pair must no longer answer to the constraints of society.

Nor does the death of the lovers in Mayreder's second novella result from despair and helplessness.

Instead it reflects Mayreder's rejection of the double standard so prevalent in Viennese society, a standard which is realistically portrayed in Stefan Zweig's work about the "belle epoque," Die Welt von Gestern. Both Zweig and Mayreder (in her diary and then later in the essays) attack the late nineteenth century educational process for its role in creating this repressive unwritten constitution so characteristic for the pseudo-moral attitude of the era. The plight of young women who were bound to a world of illusion is perhaps best symbolized in the tight corsetts and artificial reinforcements which modified their body forms so that they might better entice men. The sterilized atmosphere in which their fantasies flourished rendered them more and more sickly and in need of protection (one is reminded here of the fact that Freud's wife had to be treated for anemia all her life). Mayreder continually traces the ineptness of such figures to society's dressage of women for the marriage market. The protagonist Malvine von Elsberg, who in retelling the story of her life realizes that society must take the blame for its adversities, has reached a higher level of self-awareness and can die in peace, an enlightened woman. This is, of course, not the case with Schnitzler's Christine, who, upon hearing of the results of the duel, runs out of her idyllic bourgeois room to commit

suicide. The painting on her wall entitled "Verlassen" leaves no question as to the tragic outcome of the escapades of young Fritz. The situation is bleak: the individual, unaware, becomes entangled in a web of guilt for which there is no catharsis except artistic representation.

Despite the realistic approach in Mayreder's novellas, there are moments of individuation in which the female protagonists are able to free themselves of the bonds which have hampered their development. One such novella is the third of the first collection entitled "Sonderlinge," the only novella of the collection that was later to be published as a monograph.²⁵ "Sonderlinge" is the story of a young woman who, repressed and tyrannized by her father as her mother had been before her, is forced to take the hand of a "most correct" suitor, a man who fights for the right to marry the girl until the bitter end, who, however, upon hearing of the mother's suicide and of the scandal involving the girl's behavior, distances himself from his original plan. Merene, whose world has been limited to the loneliness of her garden and to her song of longing for the existence she has never known, ven-

²⁵ Berlin: H. Hillger, 1921.

tures beyond the confines of the garden wall, only to meet a friend, a man in search of freedom from the conventional dictates of man-woman relationships. The discovery of her own sexuality, symbolized in her increasing awareness of nature beyond the garden walls, leads her to a final rejection of the social humiliation and hypocrisy that rules the lives of those around her.

The second volume of shorter sketches and vignettes, published under the title Übergänge in 1897, contains literary pieces of diverse proportion and intent that are scarcely reminiscent of the earlier novellas or of their aspired classical novellistic form. Yet the dialogue passages, aphoristic tendencies and photographic descriptions of the latter volume still deal with the predominate theme of the former: the suffering and hardship that reality brings the exceptional woman trapped in her social context. Often, as in the first of the vignettes, the woman-narrator observes her surroundings and is tempted by some unusual object to enter into a spiritual, dream-like pilgrimage, out of which she is rudely awakened by the realities of the world around her. Mayreder's dependency upon the literary forms of the German classical period and of poetic realism appears in part to have been broken. The clear, rationally ordered syntax

of the novellas is often replaced with lyrical, alliterating currents more typical of the aesthetic qualities inherent in the works of her contemporaries. Moreover, the obvious departure from the epic breadth that characterized the earlier novellas indicates the growing influence of Nietzsche, which announces its presence thematically as well.

In the first vignette, "Unter blühenden Bäumen" which, though lacking in the characteristic sentimentality, is reminiscent of Peter Altenberg's work of the period, the narrator-protagonist proceeds along the short expanse of a park wall, describing the idyllic setting beyond, in which she perceives the outline of an old castle. The description of natural phenomena and the mood which it sets are periodically interrupted by the encroaching acquisitions of modernity: villas and garden gates that hinder creative fantasy and find the narrator yearning for the past represented by the overgrown, uninhabited rooms of the old castle. Five strollers happen along the route, five people who are in no way interested in discovering the secrets of what lies beyond the wall. Only the two young girls who busy themselves with picking flowers and scattering their pedals seem to enjoy the reverence of the idyllic situation. Two young men, engrossed in a philosophical discussion, represent two "Lebensanschauungen," the one

prescribing belief in the future, the other scornful of hope for a better life and interested only in the "Glück der Betrachtung." This philosophy of living for the moment, represented in other works of the Viennese Fin-de-siècle (Schnitzler's Theodor in Liebelei and Hofmannsthal's Andreas in his first drama Gestern) is typical for the turn-of-the-century's search for a universal value system. But Mayreder adds an ironic twist. The yearning of Hofmannsthal's Kari Bühl (Der Schwierige) for a revival of universal values (in this case a new belief in the institution of marriage) or of Andreas for a second chance at loyalty (after he is taught a lesson by his mistress) takes on quite a different meaning when juxtaposed to the plight of the fifth stroller, a woman whose bitter life has left her devoid of any capacity to believe in the past or the future and no reason to enjoy the present. For all the elements of control on her life have been determined by men. She is no longer able to make the best of the past or to improve her own life of unfulfilled promises. As the narrator leaves the scene, she overhears the little girls, after the harsh voice of the woman has scolded them for picking apple blossoms:

Aber schau' doch nur -- sind sie nicht schön, diese Äpfelblüthen hier dazwischen? Dafür verzicht' ich schon auf zehn Äpfel, wenn es sein muß! Und wer weiß, ob überhaupt Äpfel

daraus geworden wären! Da, riech einmal, wie gut!

The narrator is no longer the omniscient non-participant of the earlier volume of semi-classical novellas and no longer the seemingly aloof, androgenous and objective observer of the nineteenth century. Instead, she reveals herself as a woman keen on the idea of relating the innermost feelings and motivations (or lack of them) of her female protagonists without exalting their fate through death and the attainment of those realms which symbolize and idealize the premises of patriarchal society. The two young men, the one a believer in the future, the other a pessimist who considers hope for a better future nothing but a bad habit, a paradox in itself, carry on their philosophical conversation as if it were the preface of the next generation's catechism of male domination:

Wir aber verstehen das Leben nur als ein Versprechen -- sagst du das nicht selbst? Wir suchen und suchen -- wir suchen in der Zukunft und suchen in der Vergangenheit, weil wir mit der Gegenwart nichts anzufangen wissen. Und zu denken, daß diese Unruhe vielleicht nichts ist als eine ererbte schlechte Gewohnheit von den Vätern her, die auf das Himmelreich als ihre 'bessere Zukunft' gewartet haben! Oder vielleicht nur die Agonie der Kultur in uns, die Angst vor dem Ende, das kommen muß, ehe die 'bessere Zukunft' anbrechen kann! (Übergänge 7)

The pessimism of Schopenhauer, the apocalyptic mood of Viennese impressionism, and the prophecy of Spengler's

Untergang des Abendlandes are unmistakably present in passages of this first vignette. Only the narrator perceives the coming of a new day: "Niemand kam, niemand ging. Unhörbar fielen, wenn sich eine Blüthe entblätterte, schimmernde Flocken in den feuchten Rasen" (Übergänge 8).

The second sketch or vignette, "Drei Briefe," consists of three letters written by a woman who is critical of the convenience of marriage and who has dared to stand openly by her liaison with a married man. She in turn has suffered social humiliation through the hypocrisy of her lover, Georg. The first letter describes the pain and anguish caused by the separation and the insistence of a love that will never die. The second is full of reproach and disdain. The third, cold and coarse, is the only letter actually sent. This sketch in letter form is Mayreder's version of a woman's painful realization of the results of self-abasement. The protagonist, swept up in the total idolization of her lover, discovers that he has never been anything but a stranger. She must admit in the end that the affair was nothing but a "Verkleidungskömodie." This vignette again echoes the theme of the essay "Einschaltung über das imaginative Ich:"

Durch das imaginative Ich wird das erotische Ereignis vollends eine Verkleidungskomödie; die handelnden Personen halten sich gegen-

seitig für etwas anderes, als sie in Wirklichkeit sind: sie gehen in Masken, aber ohne es selbst zu wissen. (KdW 146)

In the same essay Mayreder describes the results of such idolization:

Die Bestätigung der erogenen Kennzeichen [the emphasis is from the original], das bedeutet, in dem geliebten Menschen wirklich jene Eigenschaften finden, die wir kraft unserer eigenen Beschaffenheit in ihm voraussetzen. In demselben Maß, als er uns in diesen Voraussetzungen enttäuscht, wird unsere Zuneigung erkalten oder selbst nach dem Gesetz der Reaktion sich in entgegengesetzter Richtung zum Haß steigern. (KdW 147)

As in the first vignette, the narrator, this time not a protagonist herself, arrives at a new level of awareness by participating in the process of verbalization, the protagonist's letter-writing. The formulation of hurt and anguish in a literary genre that has traditionally been open to women is a conscious effort on Mayreder's part to recognize the historically significant contributions of women like Sophie von La Roche, whose Fräulein von Sternheim, along with many other novels of its kind in letter form, was never accepted into the literary canon. But unlike von La Roche's Sternheim, Mayreder's protagonist takes issue with the double standards accepted in bourgeois society: "Wenn es wahr wäre, daß jeder Mann, auch der Gütigste, auch der Freieste, anders denkt gegenüber seiner Tochter als gegenüber seiner Geliebten!" (Übergänge 17). Mayreder

is keenly aware of patriarchal society's propagation of what it ironically calls "prostitution," all the while guarding its own daughters from falling astray. The theme is alluded to in the works of Schnitzler (Liebelei) and Musil (Törless). But where the male writers of Vienna's Fin de Siècle still depict their female protagonists as trapped creatures dependent upon the male dominated society around them, Mayreder's figures undergo a process of individuation. True, Mayreder's narrative techniques are much the same as those of her contemporaries: the sketch form, the dialogue passages often associated with it (Altenberg), and the frequent use of similes and subjunctive "also" phrases indicative of the language crisis ("Sprachkrise") of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries (Kleist and Musil) constitute qualities of Mayreder's writing that locate it in the decades before World War I. Yet the role of her women protagonists and their heightened level of awareness unmask her work as that of a woman writer conscious of social restraints and mechanisms of repression to which her male cohorts were less than sensitive.

"Onkel Bautz" is the third story of Übergänge, told from the perspective of the narrator-protagonist Adele who visits her girlfriend Jenny. Again, a closely guarded dialogue reveals the mendacity of rela-

tionships between the sexes and the artificial level of language that no longer proves instrumental in communication or understanding. Jenny relates an account of the children's favorite uncle, who had once spent much time with her and her children, but who now avoids their presence. It seems that the uncle and Jenny had become intimate enough for him to confide in her of his miserable first marriage, a marriage that had ended in a suicide attempt. The revelation of this unhappy love had sparked a sentimental reaction and prompted a kiss from Jenny. Her confession to Adele comes as a result of Uncle Bautz's misconstruing that kiss (along with other favors) for more urgent needs than pure friendship would allow.

More than just a depiction of the naiveté and "non-education" of young women, Mayreder's "Onkel Bautz" illustrates the mechanisms of deception and power sanctioned by bourgeois society to uphold the duplicity of human relations and render both men and women incapable of expressing their true needs. Of key importance is the role of the narrator-protagonist Adele, for it is she who begins to quiz and question her girlfriend's motivation in blaming the husband for her own apparent needs to commit adultery. "Ich sage dir das alles nur, damit du siehst, daß mein Mann selber Schuld ist, wenn ich dem Onkel Bautz von allem

Anfang an sehr vertraut behandelte" (Übergänge 28). Mayreder exposes the accusations and infidelity as the woman's only way of asserting herself in what appears to be a hopeless and vicious circle of deceit and loneliness: "Aber das kommt davon, daß Hermann mich immer wie ein Kind behandelt, dem man Alles verheimlichen muß" (31). Adele's interrogation of Jenny constitutes a new level of consciousness for the narrator-protagonist of which Jenny herself is not aware. "Da hast du weinen müssen? Ja was ist denn daran rührend, ich bitte dich? Wenn er nicht mehr auf seine Ehre hält, ist es doch natürlich, daß es ihm so erging!" (33). At this point Mayreder attacks the sentimentality of bourgeois women's literature and of the bourgeois tragedies of writers like Schnitzler, who subtly, but consistently insinuate that "Frauen nur diejenigen Männer wirklich lieben, vor denen sie sich zugleich fürchten" (34).

The forth vignette of Übergänge, "Mit dreizehn Jahren," the most autobiographical of all the novellas and vignettes, relates an episode in the life of a sensitive teenager, who, in rejecting the dictates of a narrow-minded bourgeois world, can escape only by endorsing her sister's forbidden love affair. Once again the plot centers around the repression of women and the recognition of this repression by a female

protagonist, protagonist-narrator, or by a projected female narrator who empathizes with the protagonist. Keeping in mind, however, that Mayreder does not spare any of her figures, male or female, when it comes to the exposure of internalized bourgeois conventions, it seems logical that some of her short prose works might project the perspectives of male protagonists. And, indeed, they do. The first of these male protagonists is a young bachelor-professor who reads his grandfather's autograph book ("Das Stammbuch) and is introduced to an antiquated language that aids him in reliving the memories of a past love affair. Disturbed in his day-dreaming only intermittently by an uncle who chides him for not winding his clock (something the insensitive uncle would have never forgotten to do), the young man fantasizes about his love for a married woman who has just jilted him. The fantasies are kindled by the childlike expressions and the naive ideals of the ancestors immortalized in the autograph book. In answer to his uncle's question concerning his state of melancholy (the uncle, intoxicated, has just returned with the stench of the neighborhood pub oozing from every pore), he answers: "Nichts als eine sonderbare Hyperästhesie der Geruchsnerve. Ich glaube, ich leide an einem hereditären Übel. Die Ärzte behaupten ja, daß in der Constitution der Großväter das Schicksal

der Enkel liegt!" (Übergänge 75). The numerous references to lethargy and degeneration, reminiscent of Thomas Mann's legacy of the Buddenbrook family, illustrate Mayreder's acknowledgement of the symptoms portrayed by naturalism and of the crisis of language, both thematically of major importance for the early twentieth century. The vignette also characterizes Mayreder's allegiance to the theories of gradation, exemplified in the fact that the woman protagonist bears qualities of a man. In other words, she is evolved enough to be self-sufficient, independent and assertive: she has control over her own destiny. The male protagonist, an effeminate, sensitive, affectionate man of the proportions Mayreder herself considered more developed and progressive, has reached a new level of awareness: the eighteenth century ideals of love so foreign to the empirical, desensitized world of the bourgeois uncle have experienced a rebirth in the grandson, Mayreder's ideal of the "new man."²⁶

"Die Amsel" is yet another vignette from the per-

²⁶ See the discussion of Mayreder's adherence to the theories of gradation so popular in the works of nineteenth century treatises on sexuality (Schopenhauer and Weininger), Chapter II. See also Ottokar Stauf von der March, "Die Neurotischen," in: Wunberg 239-247, for a contemporary's (negative) view on the effemination of culture.

spective of a man, this time of a terminally ill patient dealing with the fear of death. Society has dictated that he is "to take it like a man," an attitude reflected in the character of the girlfriend Babette, whom he verbally abuses because he is envious of her childlike beliefs in God and in an afterlife. She has the advantage of being uncertain of the time of her own death, the only advantage, he admits, that she has ever had over him. The resulting jealousy and paranoid accusations of her unfaithfulness (though she has been tending to his every need) lead to further attempts on his part to negate her rights as a human being. On the other hand, Babette is portrayed as an unknowledgeable, dumb, uneducated animal who allows herself to be treated like a servant as part of an unconscious maneuver to get the upper hand. As the amsel begins to sing again, Babette informs her lover that she has arranged for him to receive the last sacrament. Full of reproach and hatred for this woman, who, at least superficially, has sought only to please him, he dies.

Thematically, "Die Amsel" touches upon issues dealt with by many male writers of the period. In fact, a decade later Arthur Schnitzler was to publish his drama Professor Bernhardt, in which an insistant Catholic brings about the premature death of a patient

by arranging for extreme unction. In both cases the patient dies, ironically, because he or she is not yet willing to accept death. Schnitzler's play, however, is more of a social statement on anti-Semitism, whereas Mayreder's concern here is with power struggles and manipulatory mechanisms of personal relationships brought about by a lack of communication and the inability of individuals to perceive the needs of others. The ironic twist comes in her successful depiction of the inhumane treatment of people who supposedly love one another. She skillfully slips into each of the figures, capturing mood swings and associative synapses in a dramatic portrayal of different perspectives. The poetic device of stream of consciousness is used effectively in seizing those moments at which the protagonists lapse in and out of learned behavior patterns, reach new levels of awareness, or search in their own minds for the rationalizations upon which to base their unrealistic hopes:

Ach, in gefunden Tagen scheint es einem so selbstverständlich, daß ein reifer Verstand damit nichts mehr zu schaffen har, aber dann, wenn die Stunde kam, da man aufhören sollte zu leben, wenn man in's Nichts dahinschwinden sollte, in das schwarze, ungeheure, gräßliche Nichts --! (Übergänge 81)

"Eine blaue Schleife" (the seventh vignette of Übergänge), on the other hand, deals to a lesser extent with the subjective subtleties of interpersonal rela-

tionships. Instead, it more openly attacks bourgeois conventions and the learned behavior patterns which propagate them. Monsieur Pierre, an eighteen year old Frenchman who at the opening of the story listens to swollen, bombastic, meaningless words of "adieu" spoken by his Austrian host, smiles in graceful "acknowledgment" of the metaphorical absurdities coming his way, all the while consumed with his only interest--the girl at the end of the table with the blue ribbon in her hair. The son of a rich merchant, Pierre has come to Austria to learn German, a fashionable summer pasttime for young males of the upper bourgeoisie. He is already well versed in acceptable behavior, trained by a tyrannical father in preparation for the inauguration into adulthood (the trip to Austria) and the right of passage into the life of freedom he will be expected to enjoy as a man. He gets by with behavior unsuitable to his station in life, but is excused without reproach on account of his poor language skills. The protectiveness of the young girl's mother results in ironic situations in which the true motivation for the careful guarding is discovered: the mother is not only envious of her daughter's youth, but also jealous of the young man's attraction to her. Seeking Pierre's approval by offering him his first cigarette, the older woman simultaneously endeavors to evoke the same jealousy in

him by giggling and flirting with an officer who is willing to show her attention. Mayreder's account of this social gathering is one of her best regarding density of composition and linguistic structure: she effectively captures the moment at which the joviality and subdued merriment of bourgeois social graces expose themselves as costumes of aggressive behavior. Yet her attempts at displaying the unspoiled spontaneity of youth against the hardened gullability and mendacity of late nineteenth century bourgeois society do not purport to achieve the status of the global, metaphorical relativization inherent in German poetic realism. The society she depicts is sliding downhill into an abyss: the behavior of its members and their inability to communicate with conventional language tools attest to that fact. Moreover, the youth of that same society are so caught up in their reverence to authority that they do not dare to admit their disdain for their elders. Only the French visitor Pierre finally rejects being used as a toy and status symbol. His outburst in the French language, indicative of his newly found identity and self-reliance, is an example of the romantic irony that is typical for some of Mayreder's best and most critical prose: it does not fit into the mold of a nineteenth century love story, nor would it be suitable for the "Familienliteratur" for which Mayreder

had so much contempt. Instead, his defiance of the society around him is a slap in the face for the young Laura, who was expecting his expression of undying love. Here again it is the young man who has gained a new perspective, a more critical view of the society in which he lives. Nevertheless, this newly attained level of selfawareness from the perspective of the male protagonist does not camouflage the fact that the male members of a bourgeois society must conform to certain behavior patterns, just as its female members must succumb to the internalization of male projections. Pierre does not embark upon his journey back to France without the usual initiation into manhood (this scene reminiscent of Schnitzler's Reigen), an opportunity provided him by a lovely maid of the household whose favors render him oblivious to the "blaue Schleife."

Mayreder's depiction of the entrapment of men and women in the mire of late nineteenth century convention is evidence of her awareness, not only of the many ensuing social changes and crises of subjectivity and personal values, but also of the faltering institutions that could no longer offer the orientation they had once provided. The women's movement of the nineteenth century, spawned and supported by the endeavors of liberalism to attain certain rights for women, offered

Mayreder the footing she needed, at least initially, to launch a campaign against the traditional roles of religion, state, and culture that had upheld the antagonistic relationship between men and women for so many centuries. But Mayreder, unlike many other women writers of the period, soon realized that the women's movement would never comprehend the extent to which the internalization of male projections still governed even the most liberal of existing institutions. At this point, long before she took pen in hand, Mayreder began to question the basic premise of patriarchal society and to examine its inner mechanisms for a new assessment of social oppression and the effects it would have on the relationships of men and women and upon the evolution of society as a whole. Two of the vignettes of the second volume Übergänge, "Klub der Übermenschen" and "Adam und Lilith," clearly define Mayreder's awareness of the fragility and transience of her own social milieu as reflected in the conflict and discord of personal relations. Neither of these vignettes deals with the perfecting of domesticity, the ultimate goal of patriarchal order. Instead, they reveal the results of the perpetration of this patriarchal goal, which Mayreder predicted decades before its catastrophic manifestation.

More thought-provoking than the earlier novellas and vignettes is Mayreder's polemic in "Klub der Übermenschen" against the psychological manipulation by the strong of the weak and the weak's blind cooperation in their own deception and betrayal. She goes beyond a consideration of sexual idolization, the main theme of the essays, to consider the dangers of political idolization. In this story Mayreder ridicules the perversions of the pseudo-Nietzschean, petty-bourgeois dictator Ferdinand Renitz, who dominates a group of seven students (particularly the gullible Christian Ritter) caught in adolescent rebellion. The club swears oath to a set of principles:

Die "Tafel der Satzungen" bestand aus einem in der Mitte zusammengeklappten Pappendeckel, der auf diese Weise in zwei Hälften geteilt war. In verschnörkelten Lettern stand mit roter Tinte auf der ersten Seite geschrieben: Nichts ist wahr, Alles ist erlaubt - und auf der anderen:

1. Jeder ist, wie er ist.
 2. Jeder thut, was er will.
 3. Jeder hat, soviel er vermag.
- (Übergänge 132)

The absurdity of these principles, the very mediocre quality of the group's adherents and the baseness of Renitz are clearly exposed to the reader when the police suspect the association of the group with subversive activities. Only Christian, still exploited and humiliated by the group and Renitz, continues to believe in his leader and ideology, blinded by his

idolization. "Der Klub der Übermenschen" is not only a psychological study, but also a satire on the contemporary cult reception of Nietzsche's "Übermenschen," which, according to Mayreder, distorted Nietzsche's vision into that of an immoral dictator.²⁷

"Adam und Lilith," on the other hand, deals with the gloomy picture of the sexual relationship between a female personality and an undifferentiated man (again, Mayreder's theory of graduation, outlined in the preceding chapters). Here the criticism of the well-bred woman's dressage found in Zur Kritik der Weiblichkeit is put into the mouth of a feminist, whose words are met with indignant incomprehension and a final cruel revelation of the power of primitive masculine sexual nature over all professions of spiritual love. It remains unclear how and indeed whether the new Adam and Eve are realizable at all. But this is not the issue for which Mayreder endeavors to find an answer. It is not a question of whether feminism is able or willing

²⁷ The similarities between the figures of this vignette and the dictorial, power-hungry figures of Musil's Törless (written six years after Mayreder's vignette was published), especially with respect to the cult reception of Nietzsche's writings, cannot be overlooked. The torture and sadism practiced by the young men of Musil's work are relativized, whereas in Mayreder's vignette such behavior is focused upon as inherent in a patriarchal society.

to assert itself and its ideals, but instead a question of the type of feminism that existed in her day and her doubts as to whether it would reach its goal of destroying the repressive forces of patriarchal society. For the cynical ending of this novella is not a relativization of the ideal of male-female companionship so optimistically presented in the essay "Perspektiven der Individualität." The asexual behavior of the female protagonist at the end of the vignette is the result of a feminist movement that has evolved without the support of the other half of mankind, just as the patriarchal order before it. Lilith has successfully defended herself against the repressive forces of masculinity, but in so doing has rendered herself an asexual being, a fact of which she is only too conscious.

Seine Festigkeit reichte gerade bis zur Thüre; dort empfand er unwiderstehlich das Bedürfnis, noch einen Blick auf sie zu werfen, die ihn ohne ein Wort des Abschiedes ziehen ließ. Er wandte sich um und sah sie, immer noch den Arm aufgestützt, in derselben nachdenklichen Stellung ohne Bewegung vor sich hinstarren. Aber ihre Augen hatten sich verschleiert und ihre Wangen schimmerten von strömenden Thränen. (Übergänge 263)

Far from the "relativization of ideals" with which it has been labelled by the few critics who have raised the question,²⁸ this vignette demonstrates Mayreder's

²⁸ Anderson, diss. 182.

foresight into the complex issues surrounding the women's movement to this day, issues such as that concerning the inverted reductionism of the expression "women's movement" itself. This last vignette of Mayreder's second collection is perhaps the only appell of its day for a "men and women's movement."

The Novels "Idole" und "Pipin"

Ellen Key, a Swedish woman-writer of the turn of the century whose works were known to Rosa Mayreder (but rejected because the Swede reduced the role of women to that of educators of a new race²⁹), wrote in her treatise The Women's Movement that it was not expressly the non-fictional works of contemporary women which best described woman's view of herself within society. Instead she claimed that fictional works were

²⁹ KdW 52: Mayreder contends that Key's emphasis on the role of woman as an educator of "das neue Geschlecht" represents two popular misconceptions: "Hier treffen zwei moderne Anschauungen aufeinander, die völlig entgegengesetzt und unvereinbar sind: die Vorstellung über den entscheidenden Einfluß der Erziehung im Leben des Einzelnen, und die Vorstellungen von einem neuen, höheren Geschlecht, vom 'Übermenschen'." Mayreder herself was convinced that education has little influence over the real individual personality who is not swayed by his or her environment. By this time Mayreder is acquainted with Key's "Das Jahr des Kindes." See "Anhang über die Erziehung," KdW 52-58.

the best possible source of evidence to woman's newly acquired self-awareness.³⁰ Rosa Mayreder did not express an opinion as to which mode she endorsed, though one might infer from some of her statements about the control of "Rührseligkeit" that she might have suspected a certain ambivalence in the expression of emancipatory intention in her fictional writings and for that reason would have considered her philosophical works more consistent.

Ellen Key's opinion, though, seemed a very popular one. Indeed, the end of the nineteenth century saw a large increase in the production of women's imaginative writing, not only in what is considered the "Familienliteratur" of lesser quality, but also in the number of novels and short prose collections that received considerable attention as "serious" literature. Certainly many of these works were still bound by literary and social conventions surrounding femininity and "feminine" writing. There were few plays, for the realm of drama was sacred as a man's world and the volumes of poetry were also few in number. The one literary genre to which women could ascribe and in which women had traditionally found expression was the novel, particu-

³⁰ Ellen Key, Die Frauenbewegung (Frankfurt, 1909) 54. Quoted in Anderson, diss. 178.

larly in the form of memoirs, diary entries or letters. The Fin de siècle saw women once again producing within the confines of this poetic genre, once again limiting themselves to the literary form that had been used by women since the eighteenth century.

Many of Mayreder's shorter prose works, especially those of the second volume Übergänge, are diaries, memoirs, or novellas in dialogue form. One of the novellas already discussed and the second of the two novels to be discussed are in "Briefform." In her discussion of the images of women in the eighteenth century, Silvia Bovenschen deals with the concept of "Briefform" and its designation as a literary genre for which women writers were "eligible." Of this period, one of relatively intense literary involvement for women one hundred years before Mayreder's time, Jürgen Habermas writes:

Das 18. Jahrhundert wird nicht zufällig zu einem des Briefes; Briefe schreibend entfaltet sich das Individuum in seiner Subjektivität. In den Anfängen des modern Postverkehrs hauptsächlich ein Transportmittel für neue Zeitungen, dient der Brief bald auch gelehrter Korrespondenz und familiärer Artigkeit. [...] Im Zeitalter der Empfindsamkeit sind Briefe Behälter für die "Ergießungen der Herzen." [...] Das Tagebuch wird zu einem an den Absender adressierten Brief; die Ich-Erzählung das an fremde Empfänger adressierte Selbstgespräch; gleichermaßen Experimente mit der in den kleinfamilial-intimen Beziehungen entdeckten Subjektivität.³¹

The period of German literary production influenced by this "Empfindsamkeit" was part of the early Enlightenment, a time when subjectivity and an emphasis on the expression of feeling resulted in what Bovenschen apostrophies as a "feminization" of literature.³² The rise of the bourgeoisie, its attempts to overthrow the influence of the courtly baroque literature, as well as its need to find an aesthetic expression of its own, are factors that positively influenced the new cultus of sensitivity. The Pietists of the period, who emphasized a personal relationship with God and an active part in the creation of a new type of Christianity, also had a positive influence on the production of such literature: they rejected dogmatism and delivered religious education into the hands of the head of the family, supporting the type of literature that later proponents of Enlightenment "strategy" would propose in order to supply the rising class its aesthetic basis.³³

³¹ Jürgen Habermas, Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1968) 62. Quoted in Bovenschen 207.

³² Bovenschen 200. See also Ottokar Stauf von der March, "Die Neurotischen," Wunberg 241.

³³ See Jürg Mathes for selected texts on the theories of the Enlightenment and bourgeois aesthetics.

They, too, were most concerned about providing "the flock" with a basis of identification.

The resulting emphasis on subjectivity and the expression of feeling coincides with what Bovenschen refers to as the second most prevalent image of women in the eighteenth century: the woman of sensitivity, who by virtue of her nature was blessed with the ability to write. The introduction to a poetry collection by Anna Louisa Karsch, composed by a contemporary and published in 1746, lends weight to Bovenschen's argument that this new image of the woman writer has little in common with the image of the scholarly woman of Gottsched's creation at the beginning of the century.

Wie unzweifelhaft es sey, daß unsere Dichterin ihren Beruf allein von der Natur bekommen habe, erhellet am deutlichsten aus allen Umständen ihres Lebens. Denn darin finden wir nichts, was vermögen gewesen wäre, an statt des natürlichen Hangs einen künstlichen Trieb zur Dichtkunst in ihr zu erregen, keinen einzigen Umstand, woraus wir begreifen könnten, daß gelernte Regeln bey ihr die Stelle des Genies vertreten.³⁴

The difference between the two images of women--Gottsched's version of the scholarly lady and the later woman writer of great sensitivity--is described by

³⁴ J.G. Sulzer, "Vorrede" to: Anna Louisa Karsch, Auserlesene Gedichte, Berlin 1746. Quoted (Bovenschen 150) from the facsimile reproduction of the "Deutsche Neudrucke," section for the eighteenth century (Stuttgart, 1966) VII.

Bovenschen in her depiction of Karsch' success as follows:

Es war nicht - wie bei Anna Maria Schürmann - ein enormes Wissen, womit sie die Literaten begeisterte, sondern ihr beträchtliches Unwissen. Anna Karsch galt nicht als ein "Wunder der Gelehrsamkeit", sondern als ein "Naturwunder". Sie wurde zu einem Beispiel dafür stilisiert, daß, da der Regelzwang die "Stimme des Herzens" erstickt habe, das wahre Talent ein "natürliches Talent" sei.³⁵

It had been scholarly women like Anna Maria Schürmann, Bovenschen maintains, who had captured the interest of Gottsched in the beginning stages of the Enlightenment when the new dictates of reason taught that virtue was synonymous with education, the tool of enlightened thought. The postulate of equality that became the basic premise of bourgeois revolutionary thought also maintained that women could be educated and excel to become intellectual beings. The concept of the scholarly woman became part of the Enlightenment's emancipation process, a utilitarian principle of reason, an integral part of the rationalistic ideal of perfectability. The concept of women as witches, as beings who by their very nature have a contract with the evil forces of nature, was totally incompatible with the Age of Reason. For this reason the fathers of

³⁵ Bovenschen 150.

the German Enlightenment, writers and philosophers like Gottsched and Christian Franz Paullini, contended that women, too, are beings of reason equally capable of virtuous works:

Gott und die Natur macht zwischen uns und ihnen keinen Unterschied/sondern rüstet sie mit Tugend und Weißheit ja so wohl aus/laut der unbetrieglichen Erfahrung. Merckwürdig/daß das weise Alterthum nur unbefleckte Jungfern/als die Minervam und Musen/zu Vorsteherinnen/Patroninnen und Regentinnen guter Künste erkieset habe/deutlich hiermit anzudeuten/daß dies Geschlecht zu Wissenschaft und allerley Künsten tüchtig und bequem sey/wie die Schurmannin...in einem absonderlichen Büchlein/auch mit ihrem eigenen Beyspiehl stattlich erwiesen hat.³⁶

Bovenschen quotes numerous works of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, works by Georg Christian Lehms (Teutschlands galante Poetinnen, 1715), Johann Casper Eberti (Eröffnetes Cabinet des Gelehrten Frauenzimmers/darinnen die Berühmtesten dieses Geschlechts umbständlich vorgestellt werden, 1706), and Johann Christoph Gottsched (Die vernünftigen Tadlerinnen), to mention only a few, in which this new image of woman is portrayed as the Enlightenment's answer to the Middle Ages' vision of the demonic woman. But, as

³⁶ Christian Franz Paullini, Das Hoch- und Wohlgelahrte Teutsche Frauen-Zimmer, Frankfurth und Leipzig/Bey Johann Christoph Stößeln / Buchhändlern in Erffurth. Im Jahr MDCCV, p.6. Quoted in Bovenschen 82.

Bovenschen points out, the spook had not really vanished:

Der Spuk einer schlecht domestizierten, die rationalistischen Konzepte gefährdenden Weiblichkeit verschwand jedoch nicht wirklich, er lebte untergründig fort, und die Literatur der "Schwarzen Romantik" (Mario Praz) wurde gerade zu einem Tummelplatz solcher weiblichen Spukgestalten - auch die Lulu-Figur verdankt sich teilweise dieser Tradition -, doch er wurde vorerst...so gut wie möglich aus dem Bewußtsein ausgeblendet.³⁷

The senuous, uncontrollable witch image had only been temporarily replaced by that of the virtuous learned female, void of sensuality, asexual in her very nature, the type of woman portrayed by Rosa Mayreder's Lilith. But as the Enlightenment ideals began to weaken and the belief in the rational system to waiver, there was a tendency for the image of woman to become more voluptuous and less constrained. The image of the scholarly woman gave way to certain modifications:

Der Typus der Gelehrten wird von seinem ursprünglichen Entwurf abgerückt und defensiv den Forderungen der Arbeitsteilung angepaßt, und er verliert in dem Maße seiner Anpassung an die Anforderungen der häuslichen Realität an Substanz. Schon bald war es nur noch ein fader Bildungsbrei für geistig Anspruchslose, der den Frauen zur Sättigung ihrer intellektuellen Bedürfnisse angeboten wurde. So leuchtete das Fanal weiblicher Gelehrsamkeit lediglich für eine kurze Zeit.³⁸

³⁷ Bovenschen 124.

³⁸ Bovenschen 129.

What Bovenschen termed "rationally programmed femininity" gave way in the second half of the eighteenth century to a domestication of images. It appeared that the school of rationalism had learned a new and more subtle way to control the irrational qualities of woman: the cult of "Empfindsamkeit."

Es sind nun die bei Frauen besonders ausgeprägt vermutete Gefühlswerte und ihre durch "künstliche" Bildungseinflüsse gerade nicht verzerrte oder gar korrumpierte "natürliche Tugend," die in den neuen Bildern zum Ausdruck kommen sollen. Das für Frauen aufbereitete rationalistische Aufklärungsprogramm erscheint so gleichsam als Verrat an diesen "natürlichen" Qualitäten, und es wird energisch bekämpft, weil es die vermeintliche kulturelle Unschuld des weiblichen Geschlechts zu gefährden scheint.³⁹

Gone is the tolerant atmosphere that had praised the rational and moral virtues of the scholarly woman. Says Immanuel Kant:

Was die gelehrten Frauen betrifft: so gebrauchen sie ihre Bücher etwa so wie die Uhr, nämlich sie zu tragen, damit gesehen werde, daß sie eine haben; ob sie zwar gemeiniglich still steht oder nach der Sonne gestellet ist.⁴⁰

Rationalism had provided abstract principles of

³⁹ Bovenschen 159.

⁴⁰ Immanuel Kant, "Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht," in: Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik 2, vol. XII. ed. W. Weischedel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1964) 654. Quoted in Bovenschen 158.

reason as control over the images of women. But the scholarly woman ideal was totally dependent upon the ideas of rationalistic thought already being weakened by the irrationalism of the late eighteenth century. The short-lived "Blütezeit tendenziell egalitärer Weiblichkeitseinschätzungen" would soon become "eine Ausrichtung auf häusliche Funktionen" within the hierarchy of the bourgeois family setting, "die Vorherrschaft des Mannes und die Unterordnung der übrigen Mitglieder."⁴¹

The irrationalism of the "Sturm und Drang" period, which identified genius "im Ungelehrten, Innigen" (Lavater), in everything that rejects the constraining "mordlügnerische Philosophie" of the rationalistic doctrines (Herder),⁴² ushered in an epoch that produced Sophie von La Roche's Fräulein von Sternheim. As Bovenschen points out, the ensuing revalorization of emotion as a moral guide appeared to have opened up a domain for women, in which generally accepted characteristics of femininity became the topological ideal, an ideal that was no longer an analogy to the constructs of masculinity, as the womanly scholar had

⁴¹ Bovenschen 141-143.

⁴² Bovenschen 156.

been. However, the designation of a "Genie der Seele" did not attain equality with the genius of intellect: "Das Weibliche wurde nicht mehr analog, sondern supplementär zum Männlichen begriffen."

Die...eingeschriebenen egalitären Tendenzen - der Gedanke einer natürlichen Gleichheit der Geschlechter - werden in der zweiten Hälfte des Jahrhunderts von der Vorstellung einer natürlichen Ungleichheit verdrängt. Eine Untersuchung der anthropologischen und geschichtsphilosophischen Konzeptualisierungen des Weiblichen, die im Rekurs auf Natur die ergänzenden Qualitäten dieses Geschlechts definieren, läßt Rückschlüsse auf die implizite Behauptung einer ästhetischen Inkompetenz der Frauen zu, sofern deren kultureller Ausschluß nicht sogar explizit bestätigt und bejaht wird."⁴³

To demonstrate this supplementary role delegation that has taken the place of the scholarly woman ideal, Bovenschen quotes Rousseaus' Emile:

Aber mir wäre ein einfaches und derb erzogenes Mädchen hundertmal lieber als ein Blaustrumpf und Schöngeist, der in meinem Hause einen literarischen Gerichtshof etabliert und sich zu dessen Präsidentin macht. Eine schöngeistige Frau ist die Geißel ihres Mannes, ihrer Kinder, ihrer Freunde, ihrer Diener, aller Welt [...]. Außerhalb des Hauses wirkt sie überall lächerlich und setzt sich einer sehr gerechten Kritik aus, denn diese kann nicht ausbleiben, wenn man seinen Stand verläßt und einen annehmen möchte, für den man nicht geschaffen ist. All diese hochbegabten Frauen machen nur den Dummen Eindruck. Man weiß immer, wer der Künstler oder der Freund ist, der die Feder oder den Pinsel hält, wenn sie arbeiten; man weiß, wer der diskrete Gelehrte ist, der ihnen

⁴³ Bovenschen 163-164.

insgeheim ihre Orakel diktiert. Diese ganze Schalartanerie ist einer ehrbaren Frau unwürdig. [...] Ihre Würde ist es, nicht gekannt zu sein; ihre Ehre ist die Achtung ihres Mannes; ihre Freuden liegen im Glück ihrer Familie. [...] Gäbe es nur vernünftige Männer auf Erden, so müßte jedes gelehrte Mädchen sein Leben lang Mädchen bleiben.⁴⁴

At this point the exclusion of women from the realm of literary production had been programmed, with one exception: the Briefroman. The sensational success of Sophie von La Roche's novel, Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim, published in the year 1771, attests to the fact that the woman writer who used this genre and stayed within the sanctioned limits of the "ehrbaren Frau" could earn recognition as an artist.

Yet Madame La Roche came close to testing those limits. Her own personal demeanor was not in keeping with the ideal image of the "empfindsamen Schriftstellerin." Her behavior in the literary salons did not fulfill the expectations of those who identified with the Sternheim figure. In correspondence with her fiancé Herder in the year of the novel's publication, Caroline Flachsland clearly states her disappointment in the the real Sophie von La Roche:

Endlich ist Madame de la Roche bey uns erschienen, aber welch eine andere Erschei-

⁴⁴ J.J. Rousseau, Emile oder Über die Erziehung, 5. Buch (Stuttgart: Klett, 1970) 818. Quoted in Bovenschen 166.

nung als die simple erhabene Sternheim! stellen Sie sich vor, wie uns auf den Kopf geschlagen wurde für unser vielleicht zu großes Ideal, eine feine zierliche Frau, eine Hoffdame, eine Frau nach der Welt mit tausend kleinen Zierrathen [...] - eine Frau voll Witz, voll sehr feinem Verstand zu sehen. [...] ihre schönen schwarzen Augen sprechen rechts und links und überall - und ihr Busen wallt noch so hoch, so jugendlich, daß - kurz, sie hat uns mit ihrer allzuvielen Coquetterie und Representation nicht gefallen.⁴⁵

In Bovenschen's opinion, this discrepancy is the result of La Roche's intention to offer a compromise between the two diametrically opposed images of womanhood in eighteenth century literature:

Diesen Widerspruch, der sich auch in dem von Caroline Flachsland beklagten Unterschied zwischen der kulturellen Salonrepräsentation einer Autorin und dem empfindsamen Weiblichkeitsideal ausdrückt, sucht Sophie von La Roche, wie sich an eigenen Stellen ihres Romans belegen läßt, in einem Kompromiß aufzuheben - in dem Versuch, das Prinzip der weiblichen Gelehrsamkeit abzuschwächen, ohne es aufzukündigen, und gleichzeitig dem Konzept der empfindsamen Weiblichkeit Rechnung zu tragen.⁴⁶

The argument that Bovenschen formidably documents here is that literarily successful women of the second half of the eighteenth century had attained a competency and

⁴⁵ Herders Briefwechsel mit Caroline Flachsland, 2 vol., ed. H. Schauer (Weimar, 1926). Quoted from Bovenschen 193. (A letter from Caroline Flachsland to Herder, June 14, 1771).

⁴⁶ Bovenschen 195.

capability which had to be disguised and camouflaged behind culturally pre-formed images, images they themselves had helped to create. In other words, the only sphere in which woman could legitimately represent herself was in the realm of sanctioned images. The real people behind these images were silenced for the most part, except in the few instances, as in the case of La Roche, where the discrepancy was discovered and documented by contemporaries.

But there were other women who in the second half of the eighteenth century were willing to settle for this compromise. Their growing participation in the production of literary works can be attributed above all to the advent of a "Briefkultur" (see the above quote from Habermas) and to the subsequent legitimation of the "Briefroman" and of the novel in general,

...nicht nur, weil sie [the new genres] als - im Sinne der regelpoetischen Gattungshierarchien - inferiore Gattungen weniger strengen formalen Reglements unterlagen, sondern auch und vor allem deshalb, weil ihre Subjets infolge einer Verlagerung der literarischen Gegenstände in den Erfahrungshorizont der Frauen rückten.⁴⁷

There are feminists, who would disagree with Bovenschen on this matter of genre.⁴⁸ But one must

⁴⁷ Bovenschen 202.

⁴⁸ See Elaine Showalter, "Women Writers and the Double Standard," in: Woman in Sexist Society: Studies in Power and Powerlessness (New York: Mentor, 1971)

keep in mind that the literary genre "novel" was considered a literary orphan throughout the eighteenth century. Gottsched, in the fourth edition of his poetics, Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen, published in 1751, refers in the chapter about the novel form to a genre of the "untersten Stellen." He considered the novel a "verwilderte Abart des Helden-epos."⁴⁹ It was, of course, not more than a few decades later that the psychological novels of Anton Moritz and Christoph Wieland were to have an immense impact on literary canons and change the negative attitude toward the novel as genre in general.

Yet the eighteenth century disavowed the legitimacy of the orphaned epic form. It was not until "Sturm und Drang" popularized the "Kult des Individuums" that the novel found its place in literary history. As Walter Benjamin once said, "Die Geburtskammer des Romans ist das Individuum in seiner Einsamkeit, das sich nicht mehr exemplarisch auszudrücken vermag, auch keinen Rat geben kann."⁵⁰ The fact that the value of

452-479.

⁴⁹ Manfred Pfister, "Versuch einer kritischen Dichtkunst vor die Deutschen," in: Hauptwerke der deutschen Literatur, ed. Manfred Kluge and Rudolf Radler (Munich: Kindler, 1974) 111.

⁵⁰ Walter Benjamin, Der Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963).

this artistic form remained a subject of debate made it fair game for women, since the subject material could now be taken from a realm to which women had access: the private sphere, in which the female, no matter how individual, was now confined. It is especially within the "Briefkultur" of the eighteenth century that women were not only given the right to cultivate private correspondence, but were, in fact, praised for their accomplishments in letter writing.⁵¹

In summary, Bovenschen reiterates this advent of women to the literary forefront:

Zusammenfassend läßt sich sagen, daß die "offene Form" (F. Schlegel wird später von der "liberalen Form" des Romans und Goethe von einer "subjektiven Epopöe" sprechen) dieser Gattungen (Roman, Briefroman) ebenso wie der Umstand, daß sie ihre Sujets in Bereichen fanden, die der Erlebniswelt der Frauen nahestanden, die Partizipation der Frau an der Literatur bedeutsam erhöhten.⁵²

Rosa Mayreder continued this literary tradition that, with relatively few exceptions, was to influence the writing of women throughout the nineteenth century. After the publication of the two volumes of shorter prose pieces, Mayreder began to try her hand at writing

⁵¹ Bovenschen 202-207.

⁵² Bovenschen 216.

novels, the second of which employs the "Briefform" almost exclusively. In 1899, the year before Freud's Traumdeutung appeared, Fischer of Berlin published the first novel, Idole: Geschichte einer Liebe, which deals with the ideal man of a young woman's dreams and the frustrations that arise when the designated object of her affections does not correspond to the fantasized image. This first novel is not written in "Briefform," but its subjective subject matter is reminiscent of the "subjektiven Epopöe" of which Goethe spoke so derogatorily, just as the lyrical style and novellistic compactness are suggestive of late eighteenth century women's writing. Here the theme of sexual idolization discussed in the essay "Das subjektive Geschlechtsidol" (KdW 134) forms the pivotal point:

Das subjektive Phantasiebild bestimmt das individuelle Verhältnis zwischen dem einzelnen Mann und dem Weibe seiner Wahl: zum Glücke der Beteiligten, wenn die reale Person des Weibes dem Idole entspricht - als Verhängnis, wenn sich das Idol mit der unrechten Person verknüpft. An den Irrtümern, die den mißglückten Liebesverhältnissen zugrunde liegen, hat die Herrschaft des subjektiven Phantasiebildes einen großen Anteil. Der Kampf zwischen dem immanenten und dem empirischen Weibe wird oft in seiner ganzen Gewalt aus den leidenschaftlichen Anklagen und Vorwürfen sichtbar, aus dem verzweiflungsvollen Schwanken zwischen Haß und Liebe, welches den Auflösungsprozeß solcher Verhältnisse begleitet. (KdW 139)

Thematically, at least, the form of the novel is in keeping with the material traditionally considered

appropriate for women, despite the fact that Mayreder has dared to venture away from the "Briefform" itself.

Yet even thematically Mayreder's first longer prose work is concerned with issues far more akin to the existence of real women than were those of her contemporaries, who were often content to arrive at relativized solutions and conciliatory arrangements that do not exist in real life. In Idole, neither of the protagonists views the other as a real person; the fantasies do not match reality. Gisa is caught in a conflict between her own desire for freedom and the mundane reality of her day-to-day existence. The pessimism surrounding her constant struggle for female independence is only seldom interrupted by moments of clairvoyance and hope of a better future. The story, told in the words of this "höheren Tochter" of the "synthetic" type, depicts Gisa's attempt to escape the stifling bourgeois milieu through the idolization of the work-obsessed and hyperrational Dr. Lamaris, a man of the "dyscratic" type. Many of the passages within the short, compactly composed chapters reveal her fantasies of freedom:

Die hoffnungslose Nüchternheit dieser Umgebung fiel mir beklemmend aufs Herz...und dann fühlte ich etwas wie einen Schwindel. Einen Schwindel, wie am Rande eines Abgrundes...Warum lebte ich als ich, und sollte mein ganzes Leben lang nur den armseligen kleinen Ausschnitt der Welt sehen,

der im Bereich dieses Ichs lag?...In feierlichen Mondnächten...möchte ich meine Flügel ausbreiten und aufwärts schweben, bis die Erde unter mir liegt als eine silberne Scheibe...Und alle Schmerzen sind beschwichtigt...und alles Leben is nurmehr ein leises Wiegen im Unendlichen.⁵³

At every turn Gisa's attempts to free herself from the walls of the house and garden which cage her and the social conventions which deny her self-fulfillment and autonomy are relentlessly thwarted. She is trapped by the "Vivisektorenmiene" (I 56) of Dr. Lamaris, upon whom she is emotionally dependent and as helpless as the needle of the compass that follows the attractive force:

Zu unterst in seinem Bücherschrank, wo altes Zeug aus seiner Schulzeit aufgehäuft lag, fiel mir ein Kompaß und ein Magnet in die Hand. Ich betrachtete den Kompaß mit jedem Schauer der Verwunderung, den man empfindet, wenn man nicht durch die Gewohnheit gegen diesen Anblick abgestumpft ist. Ruhig bewegte sich die Nadel; sie fand mit wundervoller Sicherheit aus allen Lagen zurück in die Richtung, die ihr geheimnisvolles Gesetz ist. Aber plötzlich erzitterte sie und schwankte; eine fremde Gewalt bemächtigte sich ihrer, die heilige Kraft ihres eigenen Wesens war gebrochen, sie irrte hin und her, jammervoll unterworfen einer anderen, von außen wirkenden Kraft. (I 67-68)

There is no one in Gisa's life with whom she can actually communicate. She spends her time strolling

⁵³ Rosa Mayreder, Idole: Geschichte einer Liebe (Berlin: Fischer, 1989) 21-22. Hereafter referred to as "I".

her invalid father within the confines of a private garden, listening attentively to comments he has made year-in, year-out concerning the fruit bushes he plans to set out, plans he never realizes. Only on few occasions does Lamarinis (the attending physician to her father who is idolized by every member of the family except her brother) find more than few minutes to spend with her. These few moments are always devastating for Gisa, for they are a warning to her that something is not right, a warning she is not able to heed. Namely, Lamarinis never appears to be the same man twice. Every time he reappears, the reality of his existence is contrary to the vision Gisa has of him:

Ich sah diesen fremden Mann, der mir flüchtig die Hand reichte, mit Beschämung an. Ein fremder Mann -- und ich war die ganze Zeit her so vertraut mit ihm gewesen! So vertraut, daß ich zuversichtlich dachte, er würde mich mit derselben Freude begrüßen, mit der ich ihn erwartete. (I 20)

Gisa is finally overcome by her situation. Her idol, who finally marries his cook for eugenicist reasons, is unmasked as a clay-footed opportunist. Gisa has waited for nothing.

It is Mayreder's intention to expose the young girl's fantasy as foolish infatuation. Alone the torment caused by the discrepancies in Lamarinis' real appearance and Gisa's visions of him signify that the process of individuation has at least entered initial

stages. Yet the mere reference at the end of the novel to the fact that Lamaris' wife resembles Gisa throws the young woman back into a dream world that has become her reality. Gisa's reality is not a public one (epitomized by Lamaris and his work, which earns him recognition on all levels); instead she has only a private reality: her idolization. As a woman Gisa is alienated from the professional reality, that is wholly male dominated. Her inner life, the only source of legitimation, is exposed as inadequate in the face of outer pressures. In the end she fails to overcome the obstacles in her way and remains helplessly constrained by external reality's demand for dependence on a man. She resembles the woman Laura Marcolin praises as the ideal type, an ideal that Mayreder vehemently rejects in her essays.

But unlike Laura Marcolin's ideal woman, Gisa has not completely accepted her fate. There are repeated opportunities for her to recognize the roles into which society has forced her: "Es kam mir vor, als betrachte er mich wie einen Gegenstand, wie eine Sache, und nicht mehr wie eine Person" (I 10). She is confronted with information about factors in the doctor's life that could easily lead to a questioning of his motives in the treatment of not only Gisa herself, but also of his patients:

Und lachend sprach Max die Vermutung aus, daß Doktor Lamarinis sich zum Wohlthäter seines Patienten aufgezwungen habe, damit nicht Elend und Sorge diesen interessanten Fall vorzeitig dem Leben und der Beobachtung entrissen. Wahrscheinlich sei er sogar Kunde seines Patienten geworden, weil er so schlechtsitzende Kleider trage. (I 15)

Mayreder expresses this doubt of Lamarinis' motives in the words of Gisa's brother Max, who serves throughout the novel as a catalyst for Gisa's fantasy. As assistant in the clinic where Lamarinis works, he acts as Gisa's informant: "Er erzählte von ihm wie von einem Wundertier, halb mit Verehrung, halb mit Spott" (I 12). Gisa reports her brother's statements but filters their ambivalence and blots out the characteristics incongruent with her own precious image of the doctor: "Aus diesen vermischten Nachrichten über Dr. Lamarinis wählte ich heimlich aus, was mir am liebsten war" (I 12). Instead of becoming more critical of her own situation and the questionable motives of her idol, she internalizes both and finds herself supporting the doctor's behavior by imitating it, in the hope of receiving recognition: she takes up a collection for the destitute patient and delivers it, along with all her savings, to the physician. Upon receiving the letter in which Dr. Lamarinis "eigenhändig dafür dankte," Gisa remarks: "Wenn auch die Motive meiner Wohlthätigkeit keine ganz 'reinen' waren--weiß Gott, dieser Brief mit

der unleserlichen Schrift hat mich sehr glücklich gemacht!"

To the end, Gisa proves to be an artist at repressing any incongruency in her idol's behavior. Society's constraints and sanctioned roles have not provided her with the compass that her brother has carefully concealed with his treasures, a tool which he would have known how to use. Gisa picks up the compass and for a brief moment is able to marvel at its ability to find the right direction, no matter which way she moves it. Unknowingly she then brings the magnet too close, for the needle begins to quiver and lose control. "Eine fremde Gewalt bemächtigte sich ihrer, die heilige Kraft ihres eigenen Wesens war gebrochen" (I 68). Gisa's mother throws the compass back into its dusty hiding place, denying her the right to learn of its mysteries or the method for controlling the needle's movement. She is doomed to a life of punishment and sacrifice.

The question one should ask at this point is not whether this revelation of society's repressive forces can be interpreted as a statement of the author's emancipatory intentions. More important is the ambivalence of Mayreder's position demonstrated in the resolution of a potentially liberating situation through conformity with traditional norms. Lamaris marries his

healthy cook and lives happily ever after, while Gisa remains totally dependent upon her fantasies and the idol they have concocted. Her brother's final comment at the end of the novel--that Lamaris' wife resembles her--is all it takes to send Gisa back into her private reality: "Ein einziges Wort hat Alles wieder lebendig gemacht" (I 175). With this the novel ends. The vicious circle of Gisa's existence is exemplified by the fact that the novel actually opens at precisely this point: "Ein einziges Wort hat Alles wieder lebendig gemacht!...Er, an den ich gebunden bin, hat mich nicht freigegeben" (I 1). In not providing the process of individuation with the fertile ground necessary for the growth of self-awareness, Mayreder appears to doom her protagonist to the same fate as that of Schnitzler's Christine.

Or does she? Christine, "das süße Mädel" of Schnitzler's Liebelei commits suicide, or so the reader is led to believe. Schnitzler portrays Christine as a passionate, loving, but naive young woman with a seductive sensitivity, who teaches Fritz just how shallow and devoid of true meaning his life has been. He has lived for the moment, much like the figure Andreas of Hofmannsthal's one-act play Gestern, with the only difference that Andreas only loses his lover, not his life. Fritz comes to the realization that he has mis-

used and abused the young girl and in doing so has caused her great pain and turmoil. In the last scene he savors the few moments in her presence and laps up the peace and tranquility that her surroundings afford him in the few minutes left before he is to die in a duel. His visit instills in her a hope that will, in the end, also prove devastating to her.

But why does she have to die? The answer lies in Western civilization's images of women, to which the individual must conform or be doomed to extermination. Fritz has, for all practical purposes, already changed Christine's life, at least in the way that man and society view her. He has given her two choices: either she becomes like Mizi, the other young woman of the story who evidently knows the ropes and has calluses to show for her experience; or she can die and in giving up her life will be exalted. This, however, is not the same exaltation of the eighteenth century's bourgeois tragedy, where the protagonist has reached a level of consciousness in which her dilemma becomes clear and where both she and her lover are aware of having pushed the sanctions of bourgeois society too far. Catharsis is reached through their acknowledgement of society's incapacity to mobilize the boundaries of class structure and their hope of escaping these incapacities in the next life. They are products of the Age of Reason

and must conform to its rigid regulations by making the decision which best behooves them and their society.

This is not the case with Christine. She is more sensitive and knowledgeable than her eighteenth century counterpart. There is a library in her room (Gisa also reads and thinks much too much, according to Lamaris), which attests to the fact that she is cultured, educated, perhaps capable of rational thought, but at the same time passionate and sensuous. She may be unversed in the games people play, but she is natural, an attribute which has drawn Fritz to her, away from the married "femme fatale" in the black dress. It is not only her capacity to love, but her capacity and need to be a sexual being which must be silenced. As a woman she must be held back in a state of naive consciousness, much like La Roche's Sternheim, who was quite different from the woman who created her. In Christine's case, death is the only preservation of "das süße Mädel," who, should she be left alive, would become another Mizi, a callous, materialistic, egotistical "Strichmädchen," who is immediately associated with the architypical demon, the sensuous, sinful, mystical witch.

Mayreder's Gisa, on the other hand, is doomed to life in her private reality of fantasized idols. There is little hope that she will overcome the vicious cir-

cle of her artificial existence. On the contrary, the reader is left with the opinion that her fate is not much better than that of Christine or of Schnitzler's protagonist in the novella "Fräulein Else," a young woman who also commits suicide after having performed a "favor" for a family friend in the attempt to save her father's reputation. It looks as if Mayreder is upholding much the same image as her male contemporary, but this is deceptive in light of the fact that there is no relativization or exaltation involved.

In a monograph on feminine aesthetics, Sigrid Weigel describes the ambivalence in emancipatory intention as follows:

Im fiktiven Raum des Romangeschehens werden Ausbrüche phantasiert, wird Widerstand erprobt und Empörung formuliert. Aus der Verantwortung für die Gedanken und Taten ihrer Heldin stiehlt die Autorin sich aber durch deren Bestrafung oder einsichtsvollen Verzicht, ohne sich selbst die Lust am Phantasieren zu untersagen.⁵⁴

This would reduce Mayreder's intention to one bereft of most emancipatory qualities, that is, to a purely exhibitionistic recapturing of personal accounts. It is apparent from Mayreder's biography that much of the

⁵⁴ Siegrid Weigel, "Der schielende Blick: Thesen zur Geschichte weiblicher Schreibpraxis," in: Die verborgene Frau: Sechs Beiträge zu einer feministischen Literaturwissenschaft, ed. Sigried Weigel and Inge Stephan (Berlin: Aufbau, 1983) 83-137 (103).

material is autobiographical.⁵⁵ Yet it is hardly possible, in light of the earlier essays and diary entries, that Mayreder's utopian visions could have been qualified in this manner by obedience to convention.

Mayreder's second novel entitled Pipin: Ein Sommererlebnis is not only a satire on the theosophical and vegetarian quirks of a philosophical circle of which she was a member, but also an ironic criticism of the Wagner reception "en vogue." The Wagnerian cult of emotion over reason is ridiculed in the figure of Dr. Kranich and in the cult of the "Meister" and his disciples, the "Einsiedler vom Berge Alvernia," whose origination can be traced back to the boredom and amateur spiritualism of summer guests at a mountain resort. The story largely centers around the problem of the limits of knowledge of self and of others and highlights the subjective nature of perception and experience. The narrative technique takes the form of a series of eyewitness reports of the sayings and happenings by an unobtrusive female observer who deliberately refuses the role of an omniscient narrator:

⁵⁵ See Anderson for the biographical details, which include numerous affairs both before and after her marriage to Karl Mayreder.

Denn was erfährt man von dem Geschehens derjenigen, die neben uns leben? Irgend etwas ereignet sich; aber es ist nicht das Gleiche für alle, die dabei sind. Jeder handelt nach seinen verborgenen Gründen, geht nach seinen heimlichen Zielen, und der Zuschauer deutet die äußeren Zeichen. Die innere Seite des Geschehens bleibt unsichtbar und unmittelbar; sie muß erraten werden, wie man ein Rätsel löst. Darin liegt eine Gefahr des Lebens, aber auch ein Zauber. Wer das erfahren hat, wird es vorziehen, wenn der Zuschauer sich nicht in einen Erzähler wandelt.⁵⁶

The novel has a narrative frame that consists of letters from Pipin (Josef Balthasar Stöger, a figure much like "Onkel Bautz" of the novellas) to the narrator, as well as of letters from the narrator to her husband, who has been forced to send his wife on holiday alone. She has received a letter from Pipin in which he relates "first hand" the facts surrounding his divorce, the topic of every conversation at the resort. The story itself is a flashback to the preceding summer, when Pipin, nicknamed "the simpleton," had met his later bride Eugenie and had convinced her to choose him over her other suitors, with whom she was to repeatedly betray him. Gradually the various viewpoints emerge. They are collected and related by the narrator in dialogue and letter excerpts whose contradictory messages are in no way camouflaged. On the contrary, the

⁵⁶ Rosa Mayreder, Pipin: Ein Sommererlebnis, 2nd edition (Vienna: Heller, 1908) 15.

elusiveness of self-perception comes into clear focus as the narrative perspective changes. The ambiguity of expression and the inadequacies of language as a means of adequately describing the world are shown as a result of bourgeois society's destruction of individualism, symbolized in the cult of magicians that must later accept responsibility for the death of an elderly peasant woman. Language plays a monumental role as the destroyer of both illusion and reality, whose conventional semantics are inadequate for the unique experience of an emancipated woman.⁵⁷

The novel Pipin is unusual not only in its narrative structure, but also in its development of characters, with whom the reader becomes acquainted from many different perspectives. The woman narrator, having experienced herself how false a first impression can be, is determined to provide her husband with an objective account of the summer: "Hier fühlte ich plötzlich, wie wenig man einen Menschen kennt, den man immer nur in einer Situation gesehen hat..." (Pipin 24). Pipin, who constantly endeavors to restore order in the some-

⁵⁷ See the vignette "Adam und Lilith:" says the gentleman to Lilith, "Wir werden uns überhaupt schwer verständigen, genädige Frau. Wir unterhandeln in zwei verschiedenen Sprachen, die wir gegenseitig nicht verstehen" (Übergänge 250).

what complicated personal relationships and intrigues, becomes the catalyst of every conversation. Yet his character is less clearly defined than that of Dr. Kranich, the aggressor, or of Graf Hermosa, an imposter of preposterous proportions, whose homosexual escapades and flairs for cult activities eventually drive a wedge in the already faltering friendship with his beloved Dr. Kranich. The most developed of these characterizations is that of the narrator-protagonist herself, the independent, objective, somewhat withdrawn lady, who observes with the keenest powers of observation. Elmenreich, a less adaptable creature of Weininger-like proportions who ironically enough is always toying with ideas of suicide, describes her like this:

Niemand paßt besser für den Umgang mit Menschen als Sie! Sie besitzen die Gabe des Zuhörens -- und im Grunde verlangt jeder zu allererst von seinen Mitmenschen, daß sie hören, was er zu sagen hat....In diesem Punkte werden Sie nur von einer einzigen Person übertroffen, die ich kenne, und das ist Pipin. (Pipin 27)

She is the only guest who recognizes the irony of her situation in the resort's natural surroundings, where people trip over one another in their endeavors to be alone: "Die Natur hat hier ihre Ruhe und Unbefangenheit verloren. Sie gewährt der Seele keinen Raum. Sie ist keine Zuhörerin, sie will immer selber reden" (Pipin 33). Dialog and stream of consciousness alternate in

an expression of mixed emotions and bitter reactions, both emphasized by the overlapping of temporal levels. In the confines of her room where the narrator writes her letters, the causal relationships are sorted to a certain extent. Venturing out for a walk entails collecting new materials, which in turn must be collated and again sorted. It becomes evident that the narrator is always one step ahead of the reader, though she continually guards against didacticism by changing the perspective. The result is a colorful kaleidoscope of turn-of-the-century culture, politics and social history written by an anti-aesthete, whose use of irony is trumped only by her bold foreboding of the fall of the Hapsburg monarchy.

In this work it is quite clear that many of the revolutionary ideas Mayreder was to expound upon in her non-fictional writings were already part of the conscious expression in her earlier fictional works. That her female protagonists were inclined to resign themselves to their plight would seem too strict an interpretation in view of that fact. Part of what appears to be "obedience" to convention might have been Mayreder's concern of finding a publisher, a concern she remedied in part by using genres traditionally acceptable for women writers. Certainly she was aware of the differences in publication opportunities and of

the fact that her works would have to meet particular requirements. But this alone does not explain the difference in emancipatory thrust between the fictional and purely reflective works. It seems that she retains a greater interest in the darker, less analytical aspects of human life in her belles lettres; they appear to allow her greater scope in the investigation of human motives and personality, an experimental ground, so to speak, in which she can use the impressionistic associative style of the inner monologue in order to delve into the psyche of her protagonists. Perhaps Sigfried Weigel's account of escape mechanism plays a role in what appears to be Mayreder's aptitude for self-deception.

Whether or not self-deception plays a role, it is not difficult to ascertain that the discrepancies in emancipatory intent found within the discursive and fictional modes can be located in two general areas. First, what seems to be a greater pessimism in the fictional works with respect to the treatment of the female protagonists. Second, Mayreder deals openly, perhaps more realistically, with the consequences of restrictive codes in the belles lettres than in the philosophical essays. Where the author's voice must retreat into the background, Mayreder finds no rational argumentation to serve as a buffer to the shortcomings

of contemporary social-sexual relations. This resignation may seem at first glance to support the stereotypes in the works of her fellow male writers in turn-of-the-century Vienna. Yet nowhere does she render her protagonists defenseless to the exaltation of a Christine-figure. Instead, the women of her earlier prose are portrayed in a realistic milieu, void of all hope of the utopian dreams found in the philosophical essays. It is the fantasized women of Schnitzler's or of Hofmannsthal's works who can be condemned or praised, and thus manipulated beyond limits. The male authors keep their sights on the teleological moment of consolation, because they have maintained the flexibility to exalt and adjudge their figures at will. This form of didacticism is not present in the works of Mayreder. This does not necessarily rule out the notion of compromise, which an interpreter of Mayreder's fictional writings must take into account. Without a rationalistic system of images to help her breathe life into an emancipated woman-protagonist, she must resign herself to the type of portrayal that is sanctioned by the late nineteenth century reading public of Vienna. In so doing, she does not acknowledge or accept a passive existence, a fact which is evident in view of the radical intent of the non-fictional works.

Conclusion

A study of the early fictional and non-fictional works of Rosa Mayreder has shown that there are discrepancies between the two modes, both in the use of language and in the projection of images. This difference in the emancipatory thrust between fiction and reflective works has been commented on by Jacques Le Rider:

Ce qui frappe chez les auteurs qui s'illustrent aussi bien dans l'essai que dans la fiction, c'est le contraste entre la relative hardiesse des écrits de réflexion et la résignation des oeuvres narratives... Les essayistes les plus militantes deviennent pessimistes dans leurs récits de fiction. On ne rencontre même pas dans cette abondante "littérature des femmes" de l'Autriche 1900 l'équivalent de la Marcolina du "Retour de Casanova" de Schnitzler.¹

Such a comparison between non-fictional and fictional texts raises the question of the role of narrative voice in the latter. The intervention of a narrator seems to involve an aesthetic distancing from the ideological content, which proves to be analogous to the compromise Silvia Bovenschen perceives in the writings of Sophie La Roche in the late eighteenth century.

¹ Jacques Le Rider, Le cas Otto Weininger: Les Racines de l'antiféminisme et de l'antisémitisme (Paris: PUF, 1982) 164 & 166.

It appears that Mayreder, like La Roche, assumes a voice in her fiction that reveals factors in her life contrary to those established in her theoretical writings. These discrepancies, brought to light through a contrast of writing modes, suggest that the very dualistic nature Mayreder intends to escape has been internalized and projected onto her writings as a whole.

The problem of women and their fiction is not a new one. But it has rarely been expounded upon by modern literary critics from a historical perspective. Perhaps Virginia Woolf was the first to outline the concept and its complexity:

Der title "frauen und fiction" könnte bedeuten - und so haben sie es wohl gemeint - frauen und wie sie sind; oder er könnte bedeuten, frauen und die fiction, die sie schreiben; oder er könnte bedeuten, daß alle diese drei fragen irgendwie unentwirrbar miteinander verbunden sind.²

Women must first free themselves from the dictated images that are fiction in order to project images of themselves in their fiction that are real. Wherever this freedom has not been attained, it is necessary to examine not only the utopian visions of the reflective works, but also the extent to which these visions are compromised in the projection of images throughout the

² Virginia Woolf, ein zimmer für sich allein (Berlin: gerhardt, 1978) 41. The original was first published in 1929 with the title A Room of One's Own.

fictional works. Once this relationship has been established, the actual emancipatory intention within a set of social circumstances and traditions can be accurately assessed. Conversely, the disavowal of such a relationship can lead to the distortion of emancipatory achievement and to the negation of social factors which have controlled the history of women's silence.

The social factors, as Elaine Showalter remarks, constitute a complex set of considerations:

Women Writers should not be studied as a distinct group on the assumption that they write alike, or even display stylistic resemblances distinctively feminine. But women do have a special literary history susceptible to analysis, which includes such complex considerations as the economics of their relation to the literary marketplace; the effects of social and political changes in women's status upon individuals, and the implications of stereotypes of the woman writer and restrictions of her artistic autonomy.

Of the three considerations mentioned, all of which have been dealt with at length in this study, the last is of greatest significance. For, ironically, it is the stereotypes of women capable of expressing themselves that women have helped to shape. Only in recent history have women had limited power to change their political and social status or their standing with respect to the literary market. But those women who have developed creative talents and produced literary works have had, at least peripherally, the opportunity to contribute to the immense repertoire of portraits

that for centuries determined the only history of women available to Western civilization.

Once the modes of a woman writer and the discrepancies between the more public, discursive images and the "private" fictional representations are discerned, the social context within which these works have been produced must be established. The social standing of women within a given cultural climate, the support, or lack of it, afforded them by political and literary institutions and legal instances, as well as the stereotypization of women by recognized literary competencies within a culturally defined period constitute momentous factors in the quest for a definition of feminine aesthetics or an interpretation of women's writings that go beyond the frontiers of pre-aesthetic fields.³ These are the factors that governed the emergence of creative endeavors by women during three major intervals in German and Austrian history from the Enlightenment to World War I--the Enlightenment in Germany, the Romantic era in Germany, and late nineteenth century Germany and Austria.

Given the discrepancies within the works and the social and cultural contexts of their inception, one is

³ Silvia Bovenschen, "Gibt es eine weibliche Ästhetik?," Ästhetik und Kommunikation, 7 (1976), 60-75.

equipped to compare those images that women have projected of themselves and those that society has implemented for the maintenance and preservation of any given social structure. A study of the immense array of images created since the Enlightenment shows that certain images have replaced others and that patterns of alternation can be determined that are directly related to the social status of women and to their literary production. Furthermore, it has become evident that the wide spectrum of images is conversely proportional to the strength of the rationalistic systematization of Enlightenment ideals, which, as Hans Mayer has demonstrated, have failed their original intent.

This contention can scarcely be contradicted if one takes into account the Enlightenment's postulates of equality. Formal equality before the law must not be confounded with an actual, materially present equality of opportunity to make one's own life; as the history of bourgeois society can demonstrate, such formal, legal equality is well suited as an impediment and a constraint. The dialectic of the Enlightenment is ubiquitous: in the contrast between the notion of Freedom and actual freedoms, between the de facto and de jure equality, and in the attempt to concretize politically and legally the high-minded emotions of "fraternity."⁴

It was these "high-minded emotions of 'fraternity'" that had conjured up the ideal of the scholarly

⁴ Hans Mayer, Outsiders, 1.

woman, an ideal that in turn was replaced by that of the woman of unusual sensitivity, who was better suited to the late eighteenth century's declaration of woman as a metaphysically exalted principle of nature. Within this realm of nature woman could be exalted, or lowered, at will. She could be held back in a state of naive consciousness, a cult object, both a victim, exploited as easily as any malleable material on earth, or a jewel in someone's crown, a "funkelnder Edelstein."⁵ What Toril Moi calls the "monolithic unified totality"⁶ is a reference to the same restorative theory of women and art: they both fulfill a function and satisfy man's needs, whereby woman is the personification of the unity that man would like to achieve in a work of art.⁷

Thus, the image of woman in the Middle Ages, an agent of the darkest side of nature, the archal-destructive power, is transformed several times before it enters the nineteenth century. The image of the sensitive, natural woman proves to be much more resilient than that of the scholarly woman, which in its colorless, asexual rigidity cannot become a representa-

⁵ Bovenschen 37.

⁶ Toril Moi, Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory (New York: Methuen, 1985) 19.

⁷ Bovenschen 35-36.

tional figure in literature. As Bovenschen points out, there has never been a counterpart to Nathan. The sensitive woman made a much better representational figure. The degrees of idealization and idolization reflected the need for exaltation or lowering. Woman died and was raised or lived and stayed a whore.

Rosa Mayreder and the era in which she was born were witness to yet another change in the imagination of womanliness. For Mayreder was an heiress to the social dictates of the Biedermeier culture, more repressive and limiting in its view of woman's role in society than any preceding period. Throughout the eighteenth century the male strategies of rationalism had subtly curbed the image of the sensuous, uncontrollable witch of the Middle Ages. But German Romanticism changed that control forever, as Oskar Kokoschka has reminded us: "Die Aufklärung, die Erziehung zur Vernunft, hat im Garten ein Unkraut stehenlassen, welches die blaue Blume der Romantik heißt, aus dessen Wurzeln der Mythos seine Kraft zog, der sich gegen die Vernunft sträubt." The nineteenth century, no longer in possession of the subtle controls of a rationalistic system, had to till the soil until the "Unkraut" was hidden beneath the surface. Woman was tamed and confined to the realms of housekeeping and motherhood, erotically attractive only where her attributes and the decorum and ornamentation of her body had a direct effect upon

the desires of men.⁸ Eros and Thanatos become the on and off switches with which man now controlled the images tainted by sexuality and sensuality, a myth enforced as control valve for the images of the "Schwarze Romantik," which the fading ideals of rationalism could no longer keep in check. Nineteenth century and its death cult did a total inversion on the sirens, as Bram Dijkstra has illustrated in his discussion of the representations of women in the visual arts: women and their sexuality were doomed to die on a bed of roses.⁹

Rosa Mayreder was one of the first women in Austria to reject this bed of roses. As an Austrian she had to contend with circumstances quite different from those of her contemporaries in Germany, who, like Hedwig Dohm, had recourse to the eighteenth century ideals of the scholarly woman. The artificial

⁸ The women in Stifter's Brigitta represent the dichotomy of these images: the homely, virtuous mother and the dead lover, whose sensuality is eventually overcome, not by death, but by the victory of ratio and the nineteenth century strategy of relativization.

⁹ Bram Dijkstra, Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-siècle Culture. Dijkstra demonstrates how the worldly success of the male in the nineteenth century was deemed to be inextricably intertwined with the self-denial of women (p. 20). The cult of invalidism and death, which become part of a sign of passive compliance with the cultural image of extreme virtue, treat healthy women as objects of suspicion. Woman becomes a "natural invalid" and her self-negation the principle evidence of her moral value.

"Enlightenment" of the Josephinian reforms had never produced such ideals of women in Austria. There had never been a rationalistic system which supported the scholarly endeavors of women. Humanistic ideals of the German Enlightenment which were not stifled by the feudalistic traditions of the Monarchy were censored before they could reach the stages and bookshelves of the Biedermeier culture. The relatively tame compromise between the scholarly image and the "natural" sensitivity in portrayals of women at the end of the Enlightenment in Germany, a compromise that positively influenced the short-lived glory of women in the Romantic period, found no footing in the Habsburg Monarchy.¹⁰

Women of Austria had never demanded equal access to the symbolic order or to the right to be judged equally as rational and creative beings,¹¹ rights that

¹⁰ One might argue that the salon of Caroline Pichler was influenced by the romanticists of Germany. Pichler, at any rate, remains an isolated incident.

¹¹ See Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," Trans. Jardine, Alice and Blake, Harry, Signs, 7, 1, 13-35. Quoted in Toril Moi, 12-13. Kristeva sees the historical feminist struggle as a three-tiered one, which can be summarized as follows: 1. Women demand access to the symbolic order. Liberal feminism. Equality. 2. Women reject the male symbolic order in the name of difference. Radical feminism. Femininity extolled. 3. (This is Kristeva's own position and also that of Silvia Bovenschen.) Women reject the dichotomy between masculine and feminine as metaphysical.

had been granted their eighteenth century cohorts in Germany, if only by default and under the pretense of a true rationalist equality that never existed. By the same token, there had never been the rationalistic strategies to control the images of women. However, the rise of the bourgeoisie and the corresponding need for an ideology supportive of the ensuing division of labor, found exactly the right model in the virtuous maiden of sensitivity, already incorporated into the German repertoire and wholly compatible with the family cult of the Metternich regime.

And so it was that the Austrian women's movement grew out of women's emancipatory endeavors of the mid-nineteenth century and their rejection of the repressive forces of Biedermeier culture. The conditions peculiar to the bourgeoisie of Austria, which floundered in its attempts to carve an identity out of the feudalistic structure of the Habsburg Monarchy, also proved detrimental to the political basis of women's liberation. The bureaucratic institutions of the era of Josephinism, which were to outlive the monarchy itself (and still survive to this very day), worked against the ideological basis of Enlightenment standards that had given eighteenth century bourgeois Germany its sense of identity. The control of these institutions within a secularized feudal structure rendered the emancipatory endeavors of the middle-class

struggle ineffective. The frustrations of this struggle are reflected in the words of the native son Franz Grillparzer, whose works suffered the same fate as those of his contemporary Adalbert Stifter:

In einer Stunde wirst du zum Gelehrten,
Nur freilich in der anderen wieder dumm;
denn von der richt'gen Ansicht zur verkehrten
schwingt sich der Pendel immer wechselnd um.

The added increase in the influence of church over state, maintained through the secularization of the existing feudal order and the resulting devastation of any revolutionary potential, also contributed to a thorough repression of the Middle Ages and of the tension between church and state out of which the old European concept of freedom had evolved. Without this concept of freedom, the basis of bourgeois autonomy for municipal as well as for educational institutions was dismal.

Thus, the women of Austria were at a disadvantage on more than one front, first, because they were women, and secondly, because they were women within a feudal order. They had just begun to establish their basic rights to education (Marianne Hainisch), when the economic crash of the early 1870's doomed the liberalists who had supported them and ushered in the reactionary elements of anti-semitism and anti-feminism that elected the extreme right-wing politician Karl Lueger to mayor of Vienna in 1899 (over four vetoes of the

Kaiser). What was left of the short-lived women's movement in Austria was soon to dissipate in a flurry of pacifism surrounding figures like Bertha von Suttner, figures who later gave in to the resignation of the same therapeutic nihilism they had refuted just decades earlier.

This rather dismal perception of late nineteenth and early twentieth century culture in Austria, especially in light of its repression of humanistic principles and its anti-Enlightenment tendencies, is reflected in the baroque cult of darkness and what William Johnston refers to as a "fascination with death."¹² Yet there are distinct features within the period of Viennese Modernism which seem to have grown out of the early Enlightenment ideals. As Viktor Zmegac points out, the impressionists endorsed an empiricism that greatly resembled that of the early Enlightenment, with the exception of the fact that the impressionist version was based on subjective quali-

¹² Johnston devotes twenty pages to the Austrian aestheticization of death as a "bulwark against change," as a "symbol of ephemerality," and as a "refuge." In the case of many Austrian intellectuals, this need for a refuge ended in suicide (Otto Weininger, Adalbert Stifter, Ferdinand von Saar, Saar's wife, Ferdinand Raimund, Ludwig Boltzmann, Ludwig Gumplovitz and his wife, Eduard van der Nüll, Crown Prinz Rudolf, Richard Gerstl and many others). More often than not, it was their "Austrian fate," the fact that they had received no recognition for their endeavors, which led to their deaths.

ties. The Viennese still held to the idea that fantasy was subordinate to empirical and scientific values:

Die moderne Literatur ist für sich allein, abgesondert von allen übrigen Ausstrahlungen des modernen Geistes nicht zu begreifen, nur vom Standpunkt der neuesten naturwissenschaftlichen, psychologischen und soziologischen Erkenntnisse, nur vom Standpunkt der fortgeschrittensten rechts- und moralphilosophischen, technischen, volkswirtschaftlichen, soziopolitischen Anschauungen aus sind wir imstande, die künstlerischen Dokumente des großen Lebensprozesses der Gegenwart recht zu verstehen und nach Gebühr zu würdigen.¹³

The Viennese modernists may have rejected the idea of classical literature of antiquity as an ideal, as a prototype, just as the German romanticists had. But they fashioned their own program after theories set up by the French in hopes of weaning themselves away from the influence of the German naturalists. Bahr's reinterpretation of Flaubert would then make his position analogous to that of Lessing, whose reevaluation of Aristotle freed the German theaters of the normative poetics of the French classicists. The motivation behind declaring Bahr the "Lessing" of Viennese Modernism is justifiable for one reason: it sheds light on the fact that both movements were the basis of a new bourgeois identity, one of them bold and vigorous, steeped in the economic and political innovations of

¹³ Moderne Rundschau, vol.3, no.1, April 1, 1891, p.2f. Quoted by Wunberg 23.

the century, the other frail and decadent, based on an artificial life-support system that was held together by the aestheticization of experience. The comparable didacticism of both periods is demonstrated in their choice of medium: theater. Modified by the Modernists to include prose in dialog or conversational form, it still preserved the original intent: to alter the behavior of the consumer by introducing a new level of consciousness. The "Pastorensöhnchen" of the Enlightenment may have been more straightforward about this intent,¹⁴ but the "Wissenschaftler-Literaten" of the bourgeois Viennese Fin de siècle were just as intent upon creating a new level of awareness as their eighteenth century predecessors. Their program was less concerned with the uplifting of moral virtues or the identification of an audience with the rising bourgeois class. Instead their art sought to prepare the beholder for an aesthetic experience, a submersion in creativity that would have a profound influence upon the existence of the person involved. In Bahr's 1898 essay about the Secessionist building, he describes

¹⁴ An examination of the aesthetic theories of the Enlightenment, theories of Lessing, Johann Adolf Schlegel, Michael Conrad Curtius, Christian Fürchtegott Gellert and others, clearly define this didactic intent. Of relevance here is the work edited by Jürg Mathes, Die Entwicklung des bürgerlichen Dramas im 18. Jahrhundert, a collection of theoretical texts.

"Die Wiener Secession" in the following terms:

Dies kann gar nichts anderes als ein Aufenthalt von Kunstwerken sein; wir erblicken sogleich die drei Teile: unter dem Lorbeer den Vorhof zur Reinigung der Gemüter, dann den Raum für die Werke, endlich die Architektur zur Besinnung und Andacht, die Kapelle..., eine selige Insel im Tumult der Stadt, zur Zuflucht aus der täglichen Not in die ewige Kunst.¹⁵

The function of art in the Enlightenment as an institution of "Erbauung" and "Belehrung" within the bourgeois social order is modified by the aestheticism of Fin-de-siècle to become the "Reinigung der Gemüter...zur Besinnung und Andacht."

The question is, whose soul is to be cleansed? It is perhaps that of young Andrea in Hofmannsthal's first drama, Gestern, a cultivator of beautiful moments, who endeavors to grasp with all his senses the passing moment, who furiously resists habits which would dull his perception of the uniqueness of each passing moment, but who in the end must be taught a lesson by his mistress, Arlette. For Hofmannsthal, as a moralist and defender of the bourgeois ideals of perfectability and loyalty and as a crusader for the institution of marriage, must solve the problems of inconsistency and inconstancy, which pure aestheticism has brought upon the life of his protagonist.

¹⁵ Hermann Bahr, "Meister Olbrich: Über das neue Gebäude der Secession 1898," in: Wunberg, pp. 509-510.

Or perhaps the soul to be cleansed is that of the young protagonist of Robert Musil's short novel, Die Verwirrungen des Zöglings Törless, whose journey through the years of puberty and its first spiritual and physical encounters with the mysteries of yet unknown adulthood prove tumultuous in the least. Törless, like Andrea, does finally experience a process of individuation.

Certainly it is not the soul of Leutnant Gustl, that Schnitzler is concerned with, but the unmasking of the petty officer's false sense of honor and the character flaws unveiled through the technique of stream of consciousness. Schnitzler may at first play the role of an impartial narrator, but as William Rey has demonstrated, he manipulates the distance between himself and the protagonist, taking the reader with him in crucial moments of judgement.¹⁶

What the works of the many male authors of the Viennese Fin-de-siècle have in common--at least as far as their didactic intent is concerned--is that all the male protagonists undergo a process of individuation, a process that is traditionally held as the basic intent of the German "Bildungsroman." The roles which society

¹⁶ William Rey, Arthur Schnitzler: Die späte Prosa als Gipfelung seines Schaffens (Berlin: Schmidt, 1968) 69-71.

has dictated them are flexible, in that they can be altered with the changing level of consciousness brought about by the process of individuation. In the few instances where this is not the case, in Schnitzler's Gustl, for example, the author's socially critical intent is evident. The female protagonists, on the other hand, are given rigid roles from which they cannot escape. There are two women in Törless' life, the "Dirne" Bozena, who instructs the young men of the story in the ways of the world, and Törless' mother, who is reduced to the nurturing figure from whose grasp Törless must free himself and whose own sexuality is described in the controversial statement at the end of the novel: "Und er prüfte den leise parfümierten Geruch, der aus der Taille seiner Mutter aufstieg." Often interpreted as Törless' recognition of female sexuality, this statement has not been examined for its associative quality. For in the context of the story and in the scene for which it was written, it is in passing the house of the whore Bozena that Törless steals a glance at his mother from the side. The equation of the two figures, the one legal and sanctioned by the reigning social order, the other illegal, yet considered necessary for the process of individuation--this reduction and functionalization of the mother and whore is quite typical for the literature of the Viennese modernists.

This functionalization of women and its tradition in Western civilization is precisely the premise of patriarchal ideology that Mayreder sought to render obsolete. Yet the quality of her own writing was undermined by her adaptation of the notion of a unified, integrated self-identity and its compliance with eighteenth century ideals. Her endeavors to combat the therapeutic nihilism of turn-of-the-century aestheticism and its revival of the "Schwarze Romantik" by salvaging basic humanistic and universal values of the Enlightenment, led to her support of the very institutions from which she purported to have freed herself.

This divergence of feminist and aesthetic theories--a divergence typical of the modernists' endeavors to sustain a totality of humanistic thought even under historic circumstances that prevented its realization outside the spheres of art--demonstrates the fragmented, subjectivistic, individualistic psychology of repression and the relentless sexism of patriarchal Viennese society of 1900. In its criticism of this society Mayreder's work falls short of its goal. The firm perspective from which her theoretical approach purports to judge the world is void of critical intent with respect to the fallacies and frailties of her own discursive dialogue. The resignation apparent in the belletristic writings is the result of Mayreder's inability to recognize these frailties

and their origins within an aesthetic program of what Toril Moi refers to as "metaphysical essentialism."

Though Rosa Mayreder may have adhered to this metaphysical essentialism and its strict rational defenses of conventional social meaning, her creative endeavors are not void of innovation or social criticism. It is true that she makes a glorious attempt to reconcile her own revolutionary feminist thought with narrative forms to which women had traditionally had access. Like Sophie von La Roche, Mayreder is still committed to a rational or logical form of writing that exhibits congruity with the 18th and 19th century belief in the symbolic order of enlightened society. Yet, the numerous (if somewhat subtle and often unsuccessful) satirical attacks on late 19th century institutions found in her early prose are indicative of her fight against patriarchal oppression of late nineteenth century Viennese society. Her female protagonists who preserve their sanity do not do so by becoming cold and brilliant intellectuals of the type usually admired in patriarchal society. Instead they succumb to their fate, unable to preserve the precarious balance between the so-called feminine madness or hysteria and a rejection of the symbolic order which has dictated the images to which they must conform.

Mayreder, who as a feminist of Fin-de-siècle Vienna manages to cope with a rigid patriarchal order without folding under the weight of those definitions to which Viennese society would have had her conform, does not "save" her protagonists as she "saves" herself. This "resignation" cannot be reduced solely to the internalization of male humanist standards. If this were the case, Mayreder would have glorified and exalted the images of her passive Gisa-figure, a woman inextricably bound to the dictates of the images in a male-dominated society. By not rescuing her "anti-heroine," Mayreder does not sentence her to death, the typical literary fate defined by the feminist literary critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar.¹⁷ Nor does Mayreder "slant" the truth, as English women writers of the nineteenth century did, according to Gilbert and Gubar.¹⁸ She simply depicts Gisa as she is: the truth of bourgeois women's real identity, or lack of one. And in so doing, she contributes more to what Toril Moi calls the deconstruction of the myths of femininity than the feminist critiques of her non-fictional works have led us to believe.

¹⁷ Moi 58.

¹⁸ Moi 59.

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