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Review of Andrew Cusack's "The Wanderer in 19th-Century German Literature

Scott Abbott, *Utah Valley University*



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ing as a venue for an alternative, specifically feminine form of *Bildung*, while Tamara Zwick's consideration of the letters of Magdalena Pauli and Johanna Sieveking posits letter-writing as always already subverting the public/private distinction (the "separate spheres" of the volume's title) that subtend the standard nineteenth-century narrative of *Bildung*. Another such genre was the personal memoir, and accordingly, Wendy Arons's article (which readers of the *German Quarterly* will already be familiar with), on the actress Karoline Schulze-Kummerfeld's two autobiographical texts from the last decades of the eighteenth century, charts how Schulze-Kummerfeld could locate herself as actress and woman in a discursive environment that valorized anti-theatrical authenticity and insistently gendered that authenticity male.

If in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century ideology a *Bildung* was complete only once it left the intramural confines of the home for the wider fields of university, military, and commerce, *Bildung* was in some sense always already allied with historical time and development. As Bonnie Smith's magisterial study *The Gender of History* has showed, not just the experience of and attempt to make history, but even the prerogative of commenting on history was largely withheld from the domestic sphere and thus from women. Debbie Pinfold's contribution to the volume deals with three women authors who attempted to come to terms with an epochal event (the revolution of 1848) within the limits allotted them by the ideology of domesticity.

Another focus of the volume are women authors unjustly eclipsed by the men in their lives, reduced to muses, shrews, confidantes, rather than getting billing as authors in their own right. Elizabeth Krimmer's fine contribution to the volume, for instance, deals with Charlotte von Stein's *Die zwey Emilien* and Dorothea Veit-Schlegel's *Florentin*. While in the case of *Die zwey Emilien*, the connection to *Bildung* remains rather tenuous (although the question of how *Bildung* and cross-dressing may be said to interact is an interesting one), *Florentin*, on the other hand, with its insistence on frustrated reproduction and its often-invoked status as "anti-*Bildungsroman*" (Martha Helfer) offers a fine example of how the ideology of gendered *Bildung* could be slyly subverted or frustrated. Christine Kanz's contribution to the volume similarly draws on the analogy between *Bildung* and reproduction at the turn of the twentieth century.

As an ensemble, the essays collected in this volume chart out an impressive history of women's literary agency in the long nineteenth century. While the majority of the essays remain concerned with literary texts, there is a refreshing breadth of approaches, texts, and genres to the volume's contributions. Given the volume's combination of established authorities in the field and emerging voices, any scholar working on questions of gender in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany will ignore this book at his or her own risk.

Stanford University

Adrian Daub

Andrew Cusack, *The Wanderer in 19th-Century German Literature: Intellectual History and Cultural Criticism*. Rochester, New York: Camden House, 2008. 257 pp.

Interested in the diachronic history of the wanderer in various texts of the German nineteenth century, Andrew Cusack has written a book rich in information and ideas. While drawing on a wide range of works related to wandering or

traveling, Cusack writes most extensively on Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* and *Wanderjahre* ("The Wanderer as the Subject of Education"); Tieck's *Franz Sternbald's Wanderungen* and Novalis's *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* ("The Wanderer in the Romantic Imagination"); Heine's *Harzreise*, Büchner's *Lenz*, and Fontane's *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg* ("The Wanderer in Political Discourse"); and Gotthelf's *Jakobs des Handwerksgeßellen Wanderungen durch die Schweiz*, Holtei's *Die Vagabunden*, and Raabe's *Abu Telfan oder Die Heimkehr vom Mondgebirge* ("Wandering at the Margins: Journeymen and Vagabonds"). A study that includes both novels and travel narratives under the rubric "motif of the wanderer" has built-in problems, which I'll get to later, but it also has its advantages.

The insightful discussion of *Wilhelm Meister* begins with a close look at "the body language of autonomy" (14), at the metaphors of walking or gait in the novel. Herder's claim that through their upright gait humans became creatures of art becomes a productive way to gauge Meister's progressive education as he moves from "hinschlendern" and "schleichen" to "zweckmäßige Schritte" that resemble the "starke Schritte" of his mentor the Abbé (17). Cusack writes that "... 'wandern' as it appears here indicates a particular stance to be adopted toward the world, a posture of alertness whose iconic symbol is the figure of the wanderer, a man on the qui vive, whose upright stance indicates both a maximum receptivity to his surroundings and a readiness to reach out and grasp the material of which they are made" (34).

Freemasonic rituals as practiced by the Society of the Tower serve to structure Wilhelm's wandering education. As Cusack investigates the stages of Wilhelm's journey in the *Wanderjahre*, and as he argues that the reader herself acts as a wanderer in the novel, he would find good support for his ideas in my own article, "Des Maurers Wandeln / Es gleicht dem Leben: The Freemasonic Ritual Route in *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre*" (*Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift*, June 1984).

In his second chapter, Cusack turns to a pair of important romantic novels that feature journeys made by young men. Franz Sternbald's artistic wanderings driven by *Sehnsucht* find an interesting context in a discussion of the journey as a liminal state. Sternbald's wanderings are seen as a ritual process that tends, paradoxically, not to integration but to separation. And if the artist's development and growth are well represented by the metaphor of wandering, so too is the development and growth of the budding scientist/poet Heinrich von Ofterdingen.

Chapter three, the longest in the book, is an odd way station between discussions of the "motif of the wanderer" in the novels of the first two chapters and of the novels of the final chapter. The primary wanderers of chapter three are the authors Heinrich Heine and Theodor Fontane, and their books are not novels but travel narratives. Cusack tries to get around the awkwardness by dealing with the travel narratives as literary texts, which they are, and through some attention to the narrator, as opposed to the author. But in the end, the motif of the wanderer loses its focus in these very different forms of representation. This chapter would make more sense in a book that also examined Goethe's accounts of his Swiss and Italian journeys and Alexander von Humboldt's personal narrative of his journey to South and Central America.

Nonetheless, these are revealing discussions in their own right. Cusack artfully places Heine's work in the context of enlightenment travel literature, specifically the *Wanderbericht*, and finds that Heine achieves a fusion of "authentic-

ity grounded in personal observation" and "the technique of the travel satire" (104). Further, Cusack argues that the *Harzreise* includes a critique of political tourism—by "unmasking the bankrupt aesthetic of nature underlying it, and by satirizing the virulent nationalism it sought to promote."

In an interlude between Heine and Fontane, Cusack presents a thoughtful essay on Büchner's *Lenz*: "Demolishing the Sublime." After describing Biedermeier forms of travel literature and landscape aesthetics, Cusack argues that *Lenz* only experiences half of the expected experience of the sublime, the threat to his own being, and that the second half, in which the power of the human mind and will is manifest, is missing. The "awareness that subjectivity is inseparable from corporeality, and hence from material conditions" (133), Cusack notes, informs both Heine's and Büchner's political philosophies.

The section on Fontane's massive *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg* presents a conservative, antiquarian political text, with an especially interesting discussion of relations between Fontane's travel narrative and the then popular art form of the panorama. Here, as throughout his book, Cusack draws on a wide range of contemporary sources to develop detailed and sometimes surprising contexts.

The book's final chapter examines three somewhat obscure texts that gain profile through the previous discussions of the wanderer. Gotthelf's novel about the journeyman Jakob's travels through revolutionary Switzerland is seen as evoking the tension between a journeyman's necessary but dangerous wandering and the master's mature and productive stability through property. Holtei's *Die Vagabunden* emphasizes the ideology of the settled life as well. And Raabe's novel, Cusack argues, attempts to reconcile pragmatism and fantasy: we can make our own reality, but must do so in the face of political and institutional resistance.

Finally, grateful for the fuller sense I now have of wandering in the German nineteenth century, an achievement reached through painstaking attention to the wanderer in fictional and historical settings, I'm left wishing for a larger context, for the company of other wanderers in other places, the company of Rousseau ("There is something about walking that stimulates and enlivens my thoughts"), of Thoreau ("But the walking of which I speak has nothing in it akin to taking exercise"), of Wordsworth ("I love a public road"), of Robert Walser ("Ich habe einen wohligen, kleinen, appetitlichen Spaziergang gemacht"), and of Peter Handke ("Sich aufmachen [auf den Weg]: sich aufmachen"). Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (Verso, 2001) and Joseph A. Amato's *On Foot: A History of Walking* (NYU Press, 2004) would also provide pedestrian company for Andrew Cusack's more focused work.

Utah Valley University

Scott Abbott

Grant Profant McAllister, Jr., *Kleist's Female Leading Characters and the Subversion of Idealist Discourse*. New York: Peter Lang, 2005. Studies on Themes and Motifs in Literature, vol. 75. 210 pp.

The deconstructive force of Kleist's writing—whether in relationship to enlightenment philosophy, language (speech), classical and romantic aesthetics, or the law (civil, moral, divine)—is a central focus of contemporary Kleist criticism. As the title of this volume already announces, McAllister's study situates itself within this fruitful line of investigating Kleist's oeuvre, in his case works

whose titles entail the names of the eponymous central female characters ("Das Bettelweib von Locarno," "Die Marquise von O," *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, and *Penthesilea*). The mention of idealist discourse in the title of the study hints at a form of literary criticism strongly anchored in philosophical investigation. Yet while McAllister indeed bases important conclusions of his investigation on particular concepts of idealist philosophy, e.g. Kant's theory of the sublime, Fichte's notion of individuality (self-definition), and Hegel's re-cognition in the master-slave dialectic, his investigation is theoretically much broader and includes a detailed analysis of the dynamics of gender relations through the prism of different (sometimes differing) feminist theories (Irigaray, Butler, Kristeva, Paglia).

The methodological double approach, recourse to philosophical concepts and use of feminist theory, allows McAllister a cohesive demonstration of his major objectives, namely to show the reader how Kleist, through his female title characters, undermines the concept of *Darstellung*, seen by the Jena Romantics (F. Schlegel, Novalis) "as a guarantor of effective representation" (5). Kleist's disavowal of representation (*Darstellung*) as the site of knowledge and truth also subverts epistemological certainties, including rigidly defined gender differentiations. Common to all female figures is a (self-willed) "process of subjugation, self-negation, and dissolution" (168), a negative and disruptive counter model of representation inimical to epistemological stability and textual (aesthetic) closure. The fragmentary and ephemeral constructedness of Kleist's female figures points to an absence, a void at the core of idealist discourse and so reveals an essential aspect of Kleist's aesthetic theory.

McAllister partly ascribes the genesis of this dissenting aesthetic practice to Kleist's often-evoked *Kantlerise*. While Kleist seems to have suffered from the distressing effects of this crisis for the remainder of his life, it also "freed him from the normative definitions of morality, ethics, and gender, resulting in a frantic, fruitful ten years of literary production" (4). The other part of the explanation for Kleist's anti-idealist aesthetics is his own unsettled sexuality.

Kleist's turn away from a belief in metaphysical certainties results in an aesthetic turn that gives expression to the idea (the trauma) of something beyond all limits of experience and comprehension. This "outrage to the imagination" (Kant), the breakdown of comprehension, finds its peculiar treatment in Kant's notion of the sublime, specifically the dialectical concept of negative representation (*negative Darstellung*). *Negative Darstellung*, with its resistance to figuration, has long been used as an explanatory model for modern art's turn away from the beautiful (Lyotard's concept of the "differend" comes to mind) and McAllister makes judicious use of *negative Darstellung* to explain the parallels, and more importantly, the differences, with Kleist's representational practices. One key difference is that for Kleist the disintegration of comprehension, identified by Kant as an essential experience of the sublime, has no stabilizing corrective equal to Kant's account of reason's reasserting of itself in the face of the challenge posed by the sublime. There is no recourse to a shared moral law. Rather, the overwhelming incoherence, this abyss of the imagination, attains permanence as the site where Kleist's aesthetic resides as a form of negative truth. In his detailed analysis of the titular female figures, McAllister shows the effects of Kleist's uncompromising rebuke to the aims of idealist discourse. Tracing the complex and often paradoxical representations of the *Bettelweib*, the Marquise, Käthchen, and Penthesilea, McAllister delineates their transformation from figurative embodiment in the text to "a metaphoric presence as work," and finally, "as the aesthetic