SHATTERED IMAGES:
BREAKING THE TRADITION OF ENFORCED DOMESTICITY IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ELISE BÜRGER

By

Jennifer Ann Petlick

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Linguistics and Germanic,
Slavic, Asian and African Languages

1992

ABSTRACT

SHATTERED IMAGES: BREAKING THE TRADITION OF ENFORCED DOMESTICITY IN THE LIFE AND WORKS OF ELISE BÜRGER

By

Jennifer Ann Petlick

The works of the eighteenth century author Elise Bürger (1769-1833) explored in this thesis reveal a feminist perspective which shatters dominant prescriptive images for women and offers revolutionary alternatives. By placing strong and self-sufficient protagonists at the center of her plays, she subverts the traditional images of women as victims. The exploration of the areas of law, medicine, and literary and cultural products sheds light on Bürger's situation and how it contributed to her resistance to the conditions limiting women in general and writers in particular. This study deconstructs the myths surrounding Elise Bürger created by her husband and adopted by literary critics.

To my parents, Edward S. and Caroline T. Petlick

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with gratitude that I thank my advisory committee, Professors Thomas A. Lovik, Patrick M. McConeghy, Patricia R. Paulsell, and especially my committee chair, Karin A. Wurst. Their advice, encouragement, and wisdom have been invaluable. I would also like to thank Gregory J. Rumler, who never gave up on me and would not let me give up on myself.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Elise Bürger (1769-1833) was a woman whose life was far from ordinary. As judged by her husband, literary historians, and biographers in terms of adherence to the domestic virtues expected of eighteenth century women as housekeepers, wives and mothers, Bürger came up lacking. Her activities outside the home contradicted traditional roles of womanhood in the eighteenth century. After her divorce, she was active in declamation, acting, teaching, and writing. Her first literary work was published in 1799, seven years after her divorce from the author, Gottfried August Bürger (1747-1794). But the publicity from their scandalous relationship set boundaries for her professional life long after the divorce. Some theaters, such as the one in Frankfurt am Main, refused to let her perform because she had been declared the guilty party in the divorce trial. Literary and biographical lexica assume her husband's perspective when describing "Bürger's Schwabenmädchen," as she came to be known; more often than not, the focus in these lexica is her relationship to him rather than the merit of her literary works. Rarely do they mention that she was a great success in many theaters. Rarely do they mention that she was creative, generous, and industrious,

nor do they mention that she signed a statement, presumably under duress, admitting adultery and thus relinquishing her rights to her only son. She admitted her guilt in order to escape the confining marriage to a man more than twice her age who himself openly admitted to adultery and to having an illegitimate child.

Central to the analysis at hand is how Elise Bürger shattered roles created for her on the micro level by her husband, and roles created for all women on the macro level by a male-dominated society. Before showing how Bürger's life and works were all but ordinary, it is necessary to explore the bourgeois lifestyle and value system during the eighteenth century. As methodological guidelines used to interpret women's works, Jeannine Blackwell's suggestions concerning biographical information and other social constraints faced by eighteenth century women serve as a basis for understanding Bürger's choices on the one hand, and the agenda of the literary critics entrenched in a male-dominated tradition on the other. Finally, an analysis of five of her plays illustrates how she proposes alternatives for women and suggests equality for all people. Her works are non-conformist if one examines them from the dominant perspective, but they fit into a female dramatic tradition as described by Dagmar von Hoff in Dramen des Weiblichen: Deutsche Dramatikerinnen um 1800 (1989) and Karin Wurst in Frauen und Drama im achtzehnten Jahrhundert (1991). This

study attempts to expand our knowledge about images of women as they are conceived in women's literature.

SOCIO-HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The eighteenth century brought about many changes for an emerging bourgeoisie. This study focuses on changes in literary expectations, divorce laws, and women in the theater because these elements of the changing society were tightly interwoven and had a dramatic effect on the opportunities for women and especially for women authors.

During the course of the eighteenth century new moral and social values were conceived within the arts and above all, in literature. The visual arts, music, and literature which had afforded prestige to the courts and had served as a source of entertainment (Grimminger 199) became increasingly accessible to the bourgeoisie. With the emergence of a free market, writers, musicians, and other artists entered a new realm in which they could - ideally - provide for themselves financially. The development of city and national theaters and the goals of the new literary and cultural products was to ensure the dignity and moral principles of the emerging bourgeois society. In addition, Moral Weeklies, which had been flourishing since the beginning of the century, primed the readership for moralistic literature later in the century (Habermas 55-58).

These periodicals informed, instructed, advised, and promoted social ideals.

Literature moved further and further away from the Nützlichkeitsprinzip of the early Enlightenment, as theorized by Gottsched in his Critischen Dichtkunst (1730), and focused on more intellectual, moral, and philosophical ideals, including a redefined portrayal of ideal humanity. It thus became more complex and the element of entertainment became less prominent. The growing complexity of "high" literature affected a split between "high" and "low" literature. According to figures in Jochen Schulte-Sasse's Die Kritik an der Trivialliteratur seit der Aufklärung the period between 1751 and 1760 yielded only 125 works considered trivial, while the period between 1801 and 1810 yielded 1,029 works (Schulte-Sasse 46-47), although the majority of works were still considered "high literature." Similarly, the number of Schauspiele rose from 125 in between 1751 and 1760 to 1135 between 1781 and 1790 (Schulte-Sasse 46). The number of authors, including women authors, also increased from about two or three thousand in 1766 to over ten thousand in 1800 (Beutin & Ehlert 127). Schulte-Sasse characterizes the decade between 1770 and 1780 as the period in which "die Deutschen ihr Empfindsamkeitsfieber verschleppten" (Schulte-Sasse 46-47).

This split within the literary production into "high" and "low" had important consequences for the participation

of women authors. Since women were excluded from formal education, they were unable to participate in writing "high" or schöne Literatur (Grimminger 166-67). Within schöne Literatur bourgeois value systems, especially those regarding gender-specific socialization, are found. Canonical authors such as Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe incorporated these systems into their works, either portraying women as virtuous, devoted, dependent, and emotional or as evil, vindictive, and jealous. Female characters replicated valorized roles of housekeeper, wife, daughter, and mother, and their depictions often relied on the fantasy of the author rather than on reality. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, for example, confessed that he drew his male characters from real life while his female characters came from his fantasy - and - that the imagined female characters were better than the real women he knew:

> Die Frauen sind silberne Schalen, in die wir goldene Äpfel legen. Meine Idee von den Frauen ist nicht von den Erscheinungen der Wirklichkeit abstrahiert, sondern sie ist mir angeboren, oder in mir entstanden Gott weiβ wie. Meine dargestellten Frauencharactere sind daher auch alle gut weggekommen, sie sind alle besser, als sie in der Wirklichkeit anzutreffen sind . . . (Eckermann 30).

The female character was a representation of all that embodied virtue. The female became a place for the struggle

between two value systems those of the nobility and those of the bourgeoisie, apparent in both Emilia Galotti and Miß Sara Sampson. This clash between the value systems functioned as a criticism of political systems and it provided the dramatic conflict within the plays (Grimminger 456-473).

The aforementioned authors were also respected critics and theorists and thus they set literary standards. The literary attempts by those who did not conform to prescribed aesthetic standards were excluded from "high art"; women often were among those in this category. Their works sometimes dealt with different topics and they took on a form usually different from the "bürgerliches Trauerspiel," as defined by Lessing.

As women made their way into the literary scene, their endeavors were considered threatening to the female role within the home and family. Men worked outside the home to support their families, while their wives were expected to remain at home, tend to the household budget, clean, cook, mend, sew, watch over the servants, tend to the children, and be at the disposal of their husbands, who were the absolute rulers of the home (Frevert 43). For women, writing was thought to take away from their primary responsibilities and to threaten the stability of the family. The literary critic Carl Wilhelm Otto August von Schindel describes this phenomenon in the foreword to his work Die deutschen Schriftstellerinnen des neunzehnten

Jahrhunderts (1823) entitled "Ueber die Schriftstellerei der Frauen und ihren Beruf dazu":

> Einige tadeln fast jede Schriftstellerei der Frauen, als ihrem eigenthümlichen Berufe fremd, und sprechen ihr alles Verdienst ab, da sie nur, von Eitelkeit geleitet, glänzen wollen, und darüber die Pflichten der Haushaltung und Kinderzucht vernachlässigen und unglückliche Ehen befördern . . . (Schindel VI).

This prescriptive essay necessarily relegates women's works into the realm of Trivialliteratur.

Literary critics found the sale of Trivialliteratur, which was often written by women, and the public's interest in these works disgraceful. With the increase in literary production came a split into Trivialliteratur and hohe Literatur. Some critics suggest that the two types of literary production were read by distinctly different readers, the uneducated masses on the one hand, and the educated, reading circle on the other (Schulte-Sasse 48). It follows then that authors of "high literature" served as a mouthpiece mirroring the values and morals of their audience.

> [Die Dichter] akzeptierten und bestätigten die geltenden Moralprinzipien und Geschmacksregeln, sie erfanden sie nicht und veränderten sie nicht. Sie schrieben ihre Werke für ein festumrissenes und streng begrenztes Publikum und waren keineswegs bestrebt, neue Interessenten zu gewinnen, neue Leser zu akquirieren (Hauser 242).

Criticism of Trivialliteratur came about because it was thought to lower standards. In educated circles, aesthetic qualities of literature were often based on the premise that the author and his public create a single, spiritual, intellectual community (Schulte-Sasse 52). This premise was based on two main theorems:

> Alle Menschen reagieren, wenn ihr Empfindungsvermögen natürlich ist, in der Aufnahme künstlerischer Werke gleich, d.h. natürlich und richtig, weil die Seelenvermögen aller Menschen gleich organisiert sind; daraus folgt, daß der Dichter, der sich ja nach der "Natur" richten soll, die Autorität und den Geschmack des Publikums für sein Schaffen als richtungsweisend anerkennen muß . . . (Schulte-Sasse 52).

Generalizations about a reader's reaction was part of the prescriptive mindset of the critics. Some felt that aesthetic enjoyment must lead the soul to efficiency and activity, since a person's true nature cannot be measured by passiveness and quiet enjoyment. Other critics warned

aga

Tri

wei

unm

cri

art

sir

med

gre

pri

(Sc

the

Pub

(Sc

laz

Furt

cont

losi

against the over-use of sentimentality, a main element in Trivialliteratur, because it " . . . sehr schädlich sei, weil er [der Mensch] alsdenn weichlich, schwach und unmännlich wird . . . " (Schulte-Sasse 54). Another criticism of Trivialliteratur deemed it an anti-system to art, because lower literature was thought to lead one to sin. Yet another view was that in order to overcome mediocrity and become a great author, one had to possess a great spirit, as no mediocre or ill-spirited creature was privileged to experience " . . . die höchste Poesie . . . " (Schulte-Sasse 59). These criticisms were not only against the literature as a whole but also " . . . gegen das Publikum, das nach dieser Literatur verlangt . . . " (Schulte-Sasse 59). Trivialliteratur was thought to lead to laziness and passiveness:

> Der Leser der Trivialliteratur flieht alle Anstrengungen der Kräfte, alle Thätigkeit wird abgestrumpft, weil sie keine Nahrung findet, sie sinken in eine Lethargie des Körpers und des Geistes, werden unbrauchbar für den Staat, für ihre Freunde und für alles wozu eine gewisse Stärke des Körpers und Größe des Geistes erfordert wird . . . (Hoche 74).

Furthermore, it was thought to lead to the inability to contemplate and solve problems; one would only want to play, losing the ability to reason and overcome difficulties.

According to critics, the goal of Trivialliteratur was to elicit either emotions or personal enjoyment. The reader would only react to those details within the work s/he found emotionally stirring instead of reacting to the work as a unified whole (Schulte-Sasse 62). For example, women's works were often published in weekly and monthly magazines, and their story lines had many emotional, sentimental high points, presumably to entice the audience to read the following issue. Thus, the serialization of the works did not lend itself to prescriptive elements of hohe Literatur since the reader could not enjoy the beauty of the whole, dooming the serialized works automatically to be characterized as "low."

Friedrich Schiller, who referred to the authors of Trivialliteratur as "Schundskribenten," attacks this body of works, some of them written by women, thus:

> Die schmelzenden Affekte, die bloβ zärtlichen Rührungen, gehören zum Gebiet des Angenehmen, mit dem die schöne Kunst nichts zu thun hat. Sie ergötzen bloβ den Sinn durch Auflösung oder Erschlaffung, und beziehen sich bloβ auf den äußern, nicht auf den innern Zustand des Menschen. Viele unsrer Romane und Trauerspiele, besonders der sogenannten Dramen (Mitteldinge zwischen Lustspiel und Trauerspiel) und der beliebten Familiengemählde gehören in diese Klasse.

> Sie bewirken bloß Ausleerungen des Thränensacks und eine wollüstige Erleichterung der Gefäße; aber der Geist geht leer aus, und die edlere Kraft im Menschen wird ganz und gar nicht dadurch gestärkt . . . (Schiller 199).

Schiller's statement is accurate in one respect. The genre of choice by women authors typically was not tragedy (or comedy) because, according to critics, one would need a classical education replete with Latin and Greek to write according to the dictates of this genre. Instead, they wrote dramas such as the genre criticized by Schiller, "Mitteldinge zwischen Lustspiel und Trauerspiel," in which happy endings, sentimentality, and excitement were prominent elements. Prescriptive essays, such as Schindel's foreword, specifically outline appropriate types of works that women should write, none of which includes the drama, as he suggests a gender-based poetics based on physical and intellectual destinies:

> Nun wird allerdings jede vernünftige und nicht verbildete Frau den schönen und großen eigenthümlichen Beruf ihres Geschlechts, Gattin, Hausfrau und Mutter zu sein, nicht verkennen. Alles in der Organisation dieses Geschlechts, in den physichen und geistigen, so eng mit einander verbundenen und durch jene bestimmten Anlagen, in den Erscheinungen der frühesten Kindheit mit ihren

> Spielen und Neigungen, - von denen des männlichen Geschlechts so sehr verschieden (ist) (Schindel VIII-IX).

He states that if women must write they should write religious poetry, novels and stories that relate to the home because of their expertise in that sphere; travel descriptions on account of their "superior" ability to observe; accounts of their domestic experiences because they are the experts as housewives, mothers, and educators; or they should write letters and essays (Schindel XX-XXV). Any deviation from Schindel's guidelines would generate criticism. Unfortunately, the criticism was based on biased criteria, as women were not afforded equal intellectual nourishment:

> Die Frau, die sich über die Grenzen der traditionell weiblichen Bildung (Grundkenntnisse im Schreiben, Lesen, Rechnen etwas Weltgeschichte, Mythologie, Zeichnen, Tanzen, Briefschreiben, Musik und Handarbeiten, Französisch) hinaus bilden will, wird durch zahlreiche Diskurse entmutigt. Ihr werden in Zeitschriften und in der Belletristik negativ gezeichnete Bilder der gelehrten Frau in Form des Blaustrumpfs vorgeführt . . . (Wurst 35).

Eli

der

of

wer

mai

soc

dif

div

Her

in

squ

fol

law

rea

ful

how

inc

cru

slo

tha

par

boa

dis

hus

Elise Bürger's choice of the drama as her primary genre demonstrates her disregard for the educational prerequisites of a prescriptive, confining, gender-based poetics.

But literary standards and educational opportunities were only a small part of the social mechanisms for maintaining control over women's behavior. Another form of social control existed within the laws, as men and women had different legal rights. In Elise Bürger's situation, divorce laws played a large role in determining her destiny. Her husband was able to manipulate events to his advantage in order to rid himself of his allegedly adulterous and squanderous wife in order to maintain his own dignity. The following outline of the development of pertinent divorce laws will make this point clearer.

Around the turn of the seventeenth century only three reasons for divorce were acceptable: adultery, refusal to fulfill conjugal duty, and impotence. A century later, however, grounds for divorce in the German principalities included incompatibility of temper, contagious disease, cruel treatment, and irreconcilable animosity, as divorce slowly became an institution governed by the state rather than by the church (Woolsey 140).

By the mid-1700's, a divorce could be obtained if both parties agreed to it after a year's separation of bed and board. Other grounds consisted of battery, infamous disease, a plot against the life of a spouse, cruelty of the husband or extravagance or drunkenness of the wife (Woolsey

141

ter

fre

div

Nir

mut

yea

Pru

adu

sex

pro

the

was

ex-

per

th

pu

th

wo

th

(E

opt

to

Wif

Pre

141-142). When Friedrich II made a journey through his territories in 1782 and observed an abnormally high frequency of divorces, he issued an edict eliminating divorces based on trivial complaints (Erler & Kaufman 827). Nine years later, the code of 1791 accepted divorce by mutual consent if the couple had been childless for four years or if deadly hatred existed between them. The code of Prussian Landrecht, for instance, allowed divorce if adultery, malicious desertion, which included refusal of the sex act or mental or physical "accidental visitation of providence," which included mental insanity and impotence.

According to Prussian Law, the consequences as well as the grounds for divorce were regulated. A divorced person was allowed to remarry the person of his or her choice, except if s/he had been found guilty of adultery with this person. Divorced people were also obliged to show proof of the dissolution of their marriage to the clergyman who published and solemnized their re-marriage nuptials. Under these laws no time restrictions were imposed on men but women were forced to "wait according to circumstances" for three to nine months before they were allowed to re-marry (Erler & Kaufmann 827).

At the time of Elise Bürger's divorce in 1792, the options available to Gottfried August Bürger in his attempt to divorce his wife were limited. He complained that his wife would not have intercourse with him during her pregnancy because, according to her, it was painful; this,

however, would have been considered malicious desertion. He complained that she was an unfit mother and thus had her sickly son taken from her and sent to her mother in Stuttgart. The child's illness was blamed on her because she could not produce enough breast milk, thereby necessitating the hiring of a wet nurse. This was considered wasteful, as a wife's duty was to keep household spending to a minimum. Furthermore, breast-feeding had become part of the propaganda directed at women as a means of maintaining a good reputation (Frevert 47). Her inability to breast-feed was considered another failure in her womanly duties. Finally, Bürger alleged that he had come to blows with his wife when he found her with another man. Such charges of battery would have led to a speedy divorce.

Before Friedrich II's edict, G. A. Bürger would have been able to obtain a divorce on the grounds of extravagance, as his wife was not only spending money on a wet-nurse, she was not supervising the servants to his satisfaction. Ute Frevert states in Women in German History that a wife's job was to organize the work, which included shopping and managing the production and processing of the food, since few finished items could be purchased (Frevert 41). Wives were also in charge of the linen cupboards and pantries, and if she delegated these duties to a servant, it was considered wasteful and disorganized. In 1791, thirteen months after their marriage, Bürger criticized his wife's

sloppy household management because the "government of the house" was run not by her, but by "slovenly maids" who had free access to all the resources, while the woman of the house was rarely seen in the kitchen or pantry (Frevert 41-42).

But since Friedrich II had outlawed trivial complaints, the only proof Bürger was able to present in his grievance against his wife was that of adultery, after allegedly witnessing her in the sex act with a male visitor. He also had access to a letter to his wife in which the sender addressed her with the informal du, "proving" her infidelity. It was this letter that was used during the divorce trial, the only evidence he was able to use legally. Only ten years earlier, however, any of his smaller complaints against her would have warranted a divorce, and he freely told his friends and family of his dissatisfaction with his wife as a means of preserving his good name.

Although the divorce laws were written to protect all citizens, male and female alike, the fact that only men were allowed to communicate their grievances in the public sphere, suggests that a great inequality existed, making Elise Bürger unable to defend herself with the same confidence as her husband. The treatment she was forced to endure, however, seems to be counterscted in her plays through independent, clever protagonists, who do not fall victim to domineering husbands and suitors.

Another prominent social change during the eighteenth century took place within the German theater. The home life and social restrictions for women were confining and many women chose careers in the theater, enabling themselves to attain a level of independence comparable to men's. The changes in the German theater during the first part of the eighteenth century, provided new opportunities for women (Becker-Cantarino 313; Grimminger 190). After experiencing financial uncertainty in the first part of the century, wandering theater troupes enjoyed greater social acceptance and financial stability during the second half of the century, as city populations grew and the interests of the bourgeoisie turned to moral values and education. The growing interest in the bourgeois theater enabled cities to engage troupes for longer periods of time, which in turn helped increase their repertoire, equipment, and costumes. No longer were the players considered vagabonds threatening to introduce Satan to their audiences (Becker-Cantarino 317).

Women's roles in the theater, however, were still few, especially in the courtly theater. As a result, actresses were typecast according to the roles they played best (Becker-Cantarino 330). For this reason, Elise Bürger characterizes herself in her work Über meinen Aufenthalt in Hannnover as best being suited for roles as "Heldinnen und Liebhaberinnen im Trauerspiel (und) junge Weiber im Schau= und Lustspiel" (Bürger 13).

busin

and w

For t

perso

Reinh

an es

regul

faced

the n

on the

Über m

Verfas

(1801)

themse

During the second half of the eighteenth century, the business of the theater became more lucrative and accepted, and women became members of national and courtly theaters. For the first time, it was possible for women to attain personal and financial independence apart from the home:

> Sie könnten Geld verdienen - in vielen Fällen genau so viel wie der Mann, der neben ihnen auf der Bühne stand - , reisen, schwierigen Eltern oder unerwünschten Heirat ausweichen. Und sie könnten öffentliche Anerkennung finden, die Frauen sonst nicht erhielten . . . (Brinker-Gabler 421).

Reinhart Meyer supports this as well:

> Die Faszination liegt vor allem im Widerspruch zur bürgerlichen Existenz; die drückende Enge treibt die Jugendlichen zu den Truppen. . . (Grimminger 193).

Although women seemed to view the theater lifestyle as an escape, the parts they played, however, were typically regulated by male directors (Becker-Cantarino 340). When faced with criticism of their performances, women often felt the need to publicly defend themselves, either in writing or on the stage itself (Brinker-Gabler 423). Bürger's work <u>Über meinen Aufenthalt in Hannover gegen den ungennanten Verfasser der Schicksale einer theatralischen Abentheurerin</u> (1801) is a prime example. Other actresses defended themselves through the distribution of leaflets or through

prologs

lifesty

manner:

isolier

offener

Leben [

Al

eightee

overcom

Dawson

Some wo

situati

wrote p

prologs on the stage. Ruth Dawson characterizes the lifestyle of the professional actress in the following manner: sie führte "ein viel ungesichertes, sozial isoliertes, allerdings auch viel selbstständigeres, offeneres und an persönlichen Herausforderungen reicheres Leben [. . .] als die Bürgerin" (Brinker-Gabler 423).

Although women's roles were highly regulated in the eighteenth century, they did, however, make an attempt to overcome these regulations. Performing on the stage, as Dawson points out, was one way to challenge the status quo. Some women removed themselves from confining domestic situations by turning to the theater, while others merely wrote plays and dreamed of independence.

LITERARY/THEORETICAL APPROACH

The examination of women's literary works from a feminist perspective is central to evaluating themes in Elise Bürger's works. Male and female experiences in the 18th and 19th centuries, in this case, are different, and male authors' descriptions of women's experiences do not have the authority of experience of their female counterparts. Nina Baym is quoted in Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism as saying:

> [there has been] a bias in favor of things male - in favor, - say, of whaling ships rather than the sewing circle as a symbol of the human community; in favor of satires on domineering mothers, shrewish wives, or betraying mistresses rather than tyrannical fathers, abusive husbands, or philandering suitors; displaying an exquisite compassion for the crises of the adolescent male, but altogether impatient with the parallel crisis of the female (Kaplan 47).

But by favoring male experiences and representing female experiences through a male perspective, the authenticity or authority of the female perspective is weakened, if not ignored. Dominant perspectives or social norms should be

questioned precisely because they are not all-encompassing; they are unrealistic and limiting. Men's depictions of women seldom show women in relationships with other women other than jealouysly fighting over a man, presumably because male authors do not understand or recognize how women interact with one another. But by accepting women's authority in women's literary works, the dynamics of female experiences and relationships can be recognized for their authenticity.

Elise Bürger's works have no domineering mothers, only loving matriarchs; there are no shrewish wives, only those who seek to preserve their relationships; there are no betraying mistresses, only women who fight to defend their autonomy, their suitors, and their children. Tyrannical fathers, abusive husbands, and deceitful suitors, on the other hand, do grace the pages of Bürger's works, perhaps making them potentially threatening to a male-dominant society by putting ideas into the heads of a female readership or audience.

The issue of female credibility and authority as female authors forms Jeannine Blackwell's article "Anonym, verschollen, trivial: Methodological Hindrances in Researching German Women's Literature." The methodological tools described in Blackwell's artice have been used while researching Elise Bürger's life and works because they advocate female credibility and authority. She points out that works written by women are "often a

literature of the 'other Germany' - - critical, republican, socialist, utopian, or feminist - - it is not harmless, impotent droolings" (Blackwell 39).

In describing her method of studying women's works, Blackwell provides the feminist scholar with five critical categories which can be used to deconstruct myths created about women authors entrenched in a male-dominant society: 1) authority and authenticity, 2) periodization, 3) the "great artist," 4) gender and genre, and 5) reading backwards in the mirror of literary history. First, she suggests that the feminist scholar should question the authority and authenticity of the male-dominant tradition of literary history and criticism. That is, by revering authors such as Goethe whose "genius . . . is the paradigm and measure" (Blackwell 45), one denies the recognition of other types and forms of literature. Similarly, Elaine Louise Bernikow states:

> What is commonly called literary history is actually a record of choices. Which writers have survived their time and which have not depends upon who noticed them and chose to record the notice (Showalter A Literature of Their Own 36).

Blackwell continues by stating that scholars must be cautious not to accept a critic's opinion as the undeniable truth. Instead, feminist critics should re-examine the authenticity of evaluating women's writings based on a male-dominant "spiritual, intellectual, or aesthetic hierarchy"

(Blackwell 45). This can be done by examining women's authority over their subject matter, not by pushing their writings "into the framework of almost exclusively male movements which happen to be simultaneous (Enlightenment, Storm and Stress, Romanticism, Expressionism) and then find them wanting" (Blackwell 46).

Second, Blackwell suggests that scholars recognize the fact that literary categories and movements of the German canon are "directly proportional to the elite humanistic university education and the class standing of their authors" (Blackwell 46). An example of bias from a male-specific body of works cannot and should not be imposed on a female-specific body of works, since the categories often used in their evaluation, education and class background, are far from identical. Blackwell further points out that a critical period of high female literary production, 1790 to 1830, is typically categorized as Classicism and Romanticism, but female literary endeavors seldom fit either category. Instead, she calls female writings "Salonism - - the mediation of literature and social exchange by women between domestic and public life" (Blackwell 46-47). She states that women often imitated masculine literary traditions, but she contends that they also combined them with their own creativity, and the synthesis of the two should "not be to the detriment of unrecognized literary trends" (Blackwell 47).

Third, Blackwell denounces the notion of "The Great Artist", the male author whose genius earns him eternal reverence but earns the literary wife, sister, lover, or mother little more than a mention in a literary history or biographical lexicon listed under his name. Oftentimes female literary works are masked behind the name of a husband or brother, or they are kept anonymous in order to be published. This stems from the Prussian Civil Code which made it clear that the man was the head of the household and any attempts of a woman to pursue a career had to be approved first by her husband (Frevert 43). Instead of being evaluated on her writings, the female author was evaluated according to her role in the "Great Artist's" life, usually as mother, wife, or lover. The creation of a female body of literary works, therefore, must break this tradition in order to dispel myths and to present a more representative version of the truth.

Fourth, Blackwell writes, "a firm refusal of the hierarchy of genre is a basic premise for feminist scholarship" (Blackwell 50). Rather than relying on male literary critics' method of evaluating literature, which usually holds works up in comparison to the classics, Blackwell argues that the feminist critic should evaluate women's literature according to a female tradition indepencdent of classical models, since women often worked from no specific tradition. If a woman ventured into a genre typically employed by male authors, she was usually

criticized because her education in French and Italian art, complex meter, drama, poetry, and aesthetics was non-existent or second hand, and therefore their education should not be evaluated by the same standards.

Finally, Blackwell suggests that the feminist critic should read backwards to find the gaps in the literary histories, which includes seeking buried information, distrusting negative reviews, rejecting inaccurate plot summaries, and reading and re-reading works. Also important is recognizing and questioning blatant errors and repetitions in scholarship, particularly biographical and bibliographical reference works. An example can be found in Ludwig Eisenberg's (1903) account of Bürger's works, as it lists Die Irrgänge des weiblichen Herzens as Die Vorgänge des weiblichen Herzens (Eisenberg 138). Another example can be seen in Hermann Krüger's account of her life completed in 1914, where he states that her final place of residence was Cassel, instead of Frankfurt am Main (Krüger 86), which is the exact same information provided by Friedrich Rassmann in 1823, ten years before her death; Krüger seems to have taken his information from Rassmann, not bothering to update his information on Elise Bürger. Yet another biographer, C. Gerhard, lists her death date simply as "Herbst 1832," whereas most every other source lists it as November 24, 1833.

According to Blackwell, a typical entry for a female author in a biographical lexicon begins with her

relationship to her husband, brother, father, or lover, describing her role in his life, with perhaps a brief mention of her literary works, either with or without critical commentary. In the case of Elise Bürger, a more representative list of her works is only mentioned in one source, published in 1929 by a sympathetic biographer, Arthur Richel (see Appendix B). Blackwell's technique of reading backwards includes finding and reading all editions of a particular work to form an independent opinion from that of other critics in order to identify gaps and contradictions. She suggests searching for additional information in title pages, prefaces, pictures, and hidden plots to help reconstruct the works and lives of female authors and the deconstruction of the myths about these women created by a male-dominant tradition. Blackwell's five guidelines have been used to interpret and research Elise Bürger's works.

BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Marie Christiane Elisabeth Hahn Bürger was born in Stuttgart in 1769. Her father was an Expeditionsrat, General-Magazindirektor, Theater-Kassierer, and Beamter. After his death when she was twelve, Hahn's mother raised her alone, since her only sibling, a brother, was an officer in Württemberg. Elise Hahn always had an interest in the theater and according to one of her biographers, Hermann Kinder, she dreamed of a Bohemian lifestyle (158). But, she was not a member of the aristocracy or the nobility, she was not a professor's daughter, and she did not have the benefit of entry into the salon society as the result of her descent. Kinder further states that because of the pietism and narrow-mindedness in the Swabian society, Hahn felt confined. Kinder also describes her marriage to the Professor and author Gottfried August Bürger as an opportunity to satisfy her curiosity about culture and society in larger circles. Kinder states that she was often described as fresh, outspoken, flirtatious, difficult to keep entertained, sentimental, and educated, although he does not reveal, nor do any other accounts of her life, exactly how she was educated. He further writes that she belonged to an avant garde, bourgeois subculture often

common among those with a literary, philosophical education.

Elise Bürger's marriage to Gottfried August Bürger has been the topic in most every literary history and biographical entry concerning either of them. According to Ernst Consentius, the young Elise Hahn fell in love with Bürger's poem "Die Nachtfeier der Venus" (Consentius CI) after borrowing a poetry book from a friend of her mother, the Philosophiae Studiosus Herr M. Nast (Ehrmann 10). Nast found a copy of Elise Hahn's poem "An den Dichter Bürger" (see Appendix C) and sent it to Theophil Ehrmann on September 8, 1789 to be published in his political, moral, and satirical weekly newspaper Der Beobachter. Ehrmann states in the foreword to the published letters between his wife, Marianne Ehrmann, and Bürger, that he suggested she inform Bürger about the poem:

> Ey, Weibchen schlieβ doch dem lieben Mann auch ein Blatt von dem Beobachter bey, worin das an ihm gerichtete Gedicht stehet; es muβ ihn doch freuen, wenn er sieht, wie sehr er auch in Schwaben geschätzt wird, und dann trägt es auch zu weiterer Bekanntmachung meines Blattes bey! (Ehrmann 15)

After the poem "An den Dichter Bürger" was published, Bürger was the object of much attention and he contemplated finding his admirer - the "Schwabenmädchen." Ehrmann writes that he did not think it wise to reveal the identity of the woman and therefore kept it a secret. But Bürger was relentless in his attempts to find the identity of the

"Schwabenmädchen" and Ehrmann advised his wife to go to Elise Hahn in the presence of her mother to determine if she, in fact, was the "Schwabenmädchen." After it was discovered that she had written the poem, Bürger sent a poetic reply through the Ehrmanns, which Hahn answered anonymously but with her mother's knowledge. While Hahn pleaded with the Ehrmanns to keep her identity secret, they found the situation amusing, until they realized that Bürger was serious in his intentions.

In the meantime, Theophil Ehrmann became acquainted with Hahn, whom he describes as:

> ein schönes, aber sehr rasches, feuriges Mädchen von zwanzig Jahren . . . (ich) lernte sie von einer Seite kennen, die sie im gefälligsten Lichte, als ein feinfühlendes, lebhaftes, geistreiches, liebenswürdiges Frauenzimmer darstellte . . . (Ehrmann 18).

After Bürger made his marriage intentions known, the Ehrmanns could not keep the secret any longer and revealed her identity, but not until Bürger inquired about Elise Hahn's financial situation:

> Sagen Sie mir, Freundin, hat das Mädchen einiges Vermögen? Und wie viel wohl? - Freylich eine elende Frage, die ich selbst mit Ekel und Unwillen thue! Aber warum hat die Erzmetze Fortuna mich dazu verdammt, daβ ich sie thun muβ? (Kinder 25).

He also received a portrait of her, but he was somewhat disappointed by it, as he expresses to Marianne Ehrmann on February 11, 1790:

> Was ich sonst geliebt habe, war blond, daher phantasierte ich mir auch immer mein Schwabenmädchen blond . . . die Locken, wenn sie wirklich so schwarz sind, als das Bild vermuthen läßt, müßten indessen doch ein wenig gepudert werden . . . (Kinder 24-25).

The following excerpt to Bürger's brother-in-law, the brother of his two previous wives, indicates that not only was Elise Hahn's portrait important to Bürger, so too was a statement of her wealth and virtue.

> Ich werde mir wohl 1. ihr Portrait, 2. einen bescheinigten Statum ihres Vermögens und 3. glaubhafte Dokumente ihrer ehrbaren jungfräulichen Aufführung erbitten müssen. So was ist doch in Praxi noch nicht vorgekommen . . . (Pfister 233).

Bürger did in fact receive the portrait, and Elise Hahn did bring 1,000 taler to the marriage, but whether he received the other information is unknown.

Following a brief correspondence, Bürger wrote a "confession" letter to Hahn in order to paint for her an accurate picture of himself. In the letter he informs her of his previous two marriages, to two sisters. Bürger married Dorette Leonhart in 1774 but had an illicit affair

with her younger sister Molly, which produced an illegitimate son, Emil, who was forced to stay with relatives in order for Bürger to avoid shame and scandal. Dorette died in 1784 enabling Bürger to marry Molly in 1785, but their marriage only lasted a year, since Molly died in 1786. Given Bürger's three children and no woman in the house, Bürger sent his two daughters, one by Dorette and the other by Molly, to stay with relatives.

With Bürger's past out in the open, Elise Hahn discussed the prospect of marriage with her mother, who advised her to decline. With three children, the oldest being twelve, Hahn's mother thought that the undertaking would be too great for a girl of twenty. Hahn declined Bürger's proposal of marriage in a letter, but he was so certain that she would accept that he had already departed for Stuttgart to meet her when the letter arrived in Göttingen.

After Bürger's arrival, the two got to know each other, even though Elise admits that upon seeing him for the first time, she went ice cold (Laddey 127-128):

> Als ich ihn sah, seine kleine, hagere Gestalt, sein so wenig dazu passendes groβes Gesicht, welches so gar nicht dem Bilde entsprach, das ihre allzu geschäftigte Phantasie sich von ihm gemalt, als er abgemessen, nicht in feurigen Worten, wie sie

> erwartete, zu ihr sprach, überlief es sie eiskalt . . . (Gerhard 1223).

Since there is a gap in the letters, it is not possible to determine what exactly transpired between the couple, but they were apparently satisfied enough with each other to go through with the marriage in October of 1790 (Krüger 85-86). But the romantic situation Ehrmann and Consentius describe, of Elise Bürger being so moved by the great author's poetry that she was inspired to propose marriage, is contradicted in the 1872 Gartenlaube article "Aus den letzten Tagen einer Vielgennante, Elise Bürger." The article describes her home, financial situation, and her mental state during the last days of her life as told to E. Laddey by Bürger's student Hermann Hendrichs. When asked how her relationship with Bürger began, she replies:

> Die Welt lügt, es ist nicht wahr, ich habe mich ihm nicht zur Ehe angetragen! Das Gedicht war der Ausfluß einer tollen Laune, nichts weiter. Wir saßen froh beianander [sic], junge Mädchen und Männer, in Stuttgart war's, wir spielten Pfänderspiele; da gab man mir die Aufgabe, mein Pfand mit einer Antwort an Bürger, der gerade durch einen scherzhaften Aufruf die Mädchen gebeten hatte, sich seiner Wittwerschaft zu erbarmen, auszulösen. Man kannte meine Schwärmerei für den Dichter und sein tragisches Geschick.

> Ich war ein überspanntes Ding, auβerdem übermütig über die Maβen. Durch jene Zeilen stachelte ich zugleich die Eifersucht meiner jungen Vereherer an; stolz gab ich ihnen das schnell entstandene Gedicht, lachend mein Pfand zurücknehmend . . . (Laddey 127-128).

She continues to say that the poem was published without her knowledge.

Other biographers, such as Ludwig Geiger, also support Elise Bürger's version of the story. Geiger was a biographer of Therese Huber and his 1902 Insel article entitled, "Eine Ausgestoßene, Elise Bürger" includes a letter from Huber to her daughter Therese Forster corroborating Bürger's story. It describes how Huber and Elise Bürger became acquainted in Göttingen after Bürger moved there with her husband. Kinder includes Geiger's article in his bibliography but he regards Huber's conversation with Bürger as nothing more than unsubstantiated gossip among two divorced women. Kinder's biography and commentary to Bürger's Ehestandsgeschichte, republished in 1981, does not, however, include other articles, such as Laddey's, which gives an account of the marriage in favor of Elise Bürger's viewpoint, which indicates Kinder's ignorance of an important source.

Although Kinder seems negligent in portraying the whole story, his description of Bürger's expectations for his prospective wife seems to be accurate:

> G. A. Bürger wollte eine junge sinnliche Frau, geschaffen zur Wollust und mit einem vollen, schön gewölbten Busen, dazu eine schöne Seele, die an seinen Interessen den lebhaftesten Anteil nahm und Klavier spielte sowie ein artiges Gesellschaftsleben regierte, dazu eine Mutter zur Versorgung der Kinder, dazu eine tüchtige Hausfrau, die nicht nur Vermögen einbrachte, sondern auch den Haushalt so in Schuβ hielt, daβ die Schulden vermindert werden konnte - die Geliebte-Prokuristin-Kindergärtnerin-Putzfrau, die Hure-Mutter-Haushälterin . . . (Kinder 156).

Bürger himself defines a good marriage as having a wife with the following traits: "Geist, Herz, Character, und Lebensart, Sitten, Stand, Ehre, Vermögen sind zwar wichtige Ingredienzen zu einer glücklichen Ehe . . ." (Kinder 41).

Bürger's "Schwabenmädchen" was a sensation in Göttingen, and the people of the town speculated as to how the marriage would fare considering Bürger's affairs between the death of Molly and his marriage to Elise. Bürger himself writes in the confession letter entitled "Beichte eines Mannes, der ein edles Mädchen nicht hintergehen will:" (February 1790) "Übrigens kann ich nicht bergen, daβ man mich für einen ziemlichen Libertin hält, und leider! nicht

ganz Unrecht hat . . ." (Kinder 33). Not only did Elise Bürger enter into a marriage with a self-proclaimed libertine, she was forced to be mother to his children whom the couple picked up on their way back to Göttingen after the marriage in Stuttgart. G. A. Bürger states: "Ich würde sie dann wieder um mich versammelt wissen wollen, theils um Kosten zu ersparen, theils um ihre Erziehung unter meinen Augen zu besorgen . . ." (Kinder 37).

Nevertheless, Elise Bürger made herself quite visible in his life by plunging into the spiritual, cultural, and artistic aspects of Bürger's social circle. She arranged theater tours and several other activities, and she was also careful not to be overlooked or mistreated. Her dual role of keeping social obligations and integrating herself into salons life, as well as her role as wife, mother, and housekeeper in a small town led to complications. Jealousy and envy on account of her beauty and talent caused many of the women in the town to resent her, while their husbands were enamored with her. Shortly after her marriage, Elise Bürger wrote a letter to her mother expressing contentment with her new lifestyle. She describes how those in their social circle have picnics, dance, read, play the piano, and play blind man's bluff. Nothing in her letter indicates any disharmony between her and her husband. Bürger's discontent with his wife, on the other hand, surfaces when he writes a letter to his mother-in-law (February 3, 1792) describing Elise as lazy, wasteful, squanderous, and adulterous. He

states that there are caricatures of him as a cuckolded husband circulating around the town because of his wife's indiscretions. The fact that she would not have sexual relations with him during her pregnancy led him to believe that she was being unfaithful and that their child together was not his, while she claimed that she found intercourse painful. Their son Agathon, who was sickly and considered mentally impaired, was born August 1, 1791. Elise Bürger was blamed for her son's ill health because she was unable to produce enough breast milk to nourish him and a wet nurse had to be hired. Bürger not only viewed this a poor excuse for her to relinquish her responsibilities as a mother, it cost him money, something he had little of, even though she brought 1,000 taler to the marriage.

Therese Huber's letter to her daughter quotes Elise Bürger as saying that there was many a rendezvous during her marriage but no relationships until one with Herr von Hardenberg, a man with whom she was allegedly found in the act. G. A. Bürger admits that he often went through her journal, where he found souvenirs and read about her adventures. He also went to the postmaster, informed him of his wife's activities, and forced him to relinquish a letter addressed to her. After he read the letter, he went home to his wife and spied on her through a hole he had bored through her bedroom door. He writes: "Ich verschaffte mir einen Bohrer, und bohrte an einer bequemen, nicht leicht bemerklichen Stelle der Thür ein solches Löchlein, daß ich

dadurch das ganze Sopha übersehen konnte . . ." (Kinder 127).

After allegedly seeing the pair in the act through his peep hole, he broke into her room, challenged his wife's lover to a duel, and fought with her until he "misshandelt sie mit Ohrfeigen" (Geiger 162), which she deserved a thousand times more than he gave her: "Über ihr reitend hielt ich mit den Knieen ihre Arme am Boden fest, und gab ihr ein Dutzend derjenigen Ohrfeigen, die sie zu tausenden verdiente . . ." (Kinder 132). Bürger claimed to have seen "die Hauptteile zusammen zu fügen, und hatte es entweder schon gethan, oder war nahe daran" on the sofa (Kinder 132).

After exerting physical force over his wife, Bürger presented the only tangible evidence he could find to bring the charge of adultery against her, the letter he had intercepted from the postmaster, in which she is addressed with the familiar <u>du</u> by a man other than her husband. Bürger also named Philip Michalis, the brother of Caroline Michaelis Schlegel Schelling, an adversary of Elise Bürger, in the court documents as one of her many alleged lovers.

Following the incident in her room, Elise Bürger gave her husband the incriminating letter back, said she was leaving him, packed her belongings, signed over her rights to her son, and admitted adultery "um die Scheidung zu bewirken" (Geiger 162). The couple was divorced on March 31, 1792. Elise Bürger was named the guilty party and forbidden by the court ever to remarry (Eisenberg 138).

went

she

want

His

lett

marr

(Frev

but r

descr

Bürge

She w

looke

again,

left t

embarr

relat

caused

demons

career

two ye

but Ki

was al

litera

broken

A

suppor

The day after Bürger left her husband, however, she went to Hardenberg's sister, Frau von Marezoll, with whom she had a trusted friendship. Hardenberg hurried to her and wanted to make their relationship legal by marrying her. His father, on the other hand, opposed the union and wrote a letter to Elise Bürger expressing his feelings, since all marriages were forbidden unless sanctified by one's father (Frevert 43). She considered Hardenberg's marriage proposal but rejected it. Frau von Marezoll's husband, whom Huber described as an "alter, ekelhafter Mann," fell in love with Bürger and she had no other choice but to leave the house. She went to the home of Professor Trapp in Wolfenbüttel and looked for a position as a Gesellschafterin in Leipzig. But again, the man of the house fell in love with her and she left to visit her sick mother in Stuttgart. But she was embarrassed by her reputation there and decided to stay with relatives in Frankfurt. She became caught up in the unrest caused by the French Revolution and took part in many demonstrations, and it was then that she decided to make a career out of acting. G. A. Bürger's early death in 1794, two years after their divorce, is often attributed to her, but Kinder states that, although he was of ill-health, he was also active in the revolution and pursued his own literary endeavors, and did not merely fade away from a broken heart as Schlegel-Schelling asserts (Kinder 163).

After leaving her husband, Bürger's possibilities to support herself were limited. Kinder states that she could

bec

mot

Act

agr

car

die

hat

But

loss

exis

of r

not

uniq

thro

have

prof

were

(Joe

was

abil

meine

Verfa

in wh

defen

1796,

Schoc

become a mistress, try to regain her status as a good mother, or learn a profession. She chose the latter. Acting became Elise Bürger's passion and Heinrich Stümke agrees with Gisela Brinker-Gabler when he states that a career as an actress: "ist noch immer der einzige, in dem die Frau völlige Gleichberechtigung mit dem Manne erlangt hat und dem Mann ebenbürtig zur Seite steht" (Stümke 113). But the price of increased independence was typically the loss of social respectability. A problem for actresses existed in the fact that there was no clearly defined system of rights or representation for them. Actresses who were not highly successful were encouraged, because of their unique economic situation, to embellish their earnings through the support of "interested" admirers. This seems to have been condoned by their social circle as a part of their profession, as they enjoyed greater moral freedom; actors were not judged according to society's usual moral codes (Joeres & Maynes 70).

Once out in the professional world of acting, Bürger was unable to passively take criticism of her acting abilities from her adversaries. In 1801 she wrote Über meinen Aufenthalt in Hannover, gegen den ungenannten Verfasser der Schicksale einer theatralischen Abenteuerin, in which she outlines her professional activities and defends her talent. She went to Hamburg in September of 1796, educated herself as an actress with Professor Schochers in Leipzig, and became a member of Altona's

Nationaltheater (Bürger Über meinen Aufenthalt in Hannover 5). She debuted as Lady Milford in Kabale und Liebe and lived in Altona for three years. In September of 1799 she travelled to Bremen and was allowed to play roles such as Ariadne, Klara von Hoheneichen, and Elvira in Rollas Tod, and she remained there for seven months, planning to return the next year. She wanted to travel in the summer, get acquainted with other actors and actresses and then return in the winter to Bremen, and she also wanted to visit her family, presumably her mother and son, whom she had not seen in four years. Before she left Bremen, she obtained a letter of recommendation from the director of the theater, Dr. Schütte, because she hoped to perform in Hannover through which she would be passing.

On May 2, 1799 she played Ariadne in Hannover, which, according to her, was well-received, and a few days later she went on stage as Elvira. In addition to her theatrical performances, she also mentions that she was "als Schrifstellerin nicht unglücklicher in Hannover als ich es als Schauspielerin gewesen war" (Bürger 15). Elisabeth Mentzel and Wolfgang von Wurzbach attribute the opposition and competition she faced in Hannover to her success there. Herr and Frau Reinhard, colleagues of Bürger, are given credit for the publication of G. A. Bürger's Ehestandsgeschichte, a detailed account written by her husband maligning her, in hopes of ruining her career. In the 1912/13 Bühne und Welt article "Neues über Elise

Bürger," Elizabeth Mentzel writes that Reinhard's motivation for publishing the letters was the fact that his wife had almost every leading female role in the Hannover theater until Elise Bürger began performing there, whereas Wurzbach states that Bürger refused Reinhard's sexual advances and he had the letters published as an act of revenge.

After leaving Hannover, Bürger went to Celle, where she was well-received. She performed her own play, Adelheit, Gräfin von Teck, Ritterschauspiel in fünf Aufzügen, which was a success, and she was invited to give a farewell speech on the night of her last performance. The troupe had also performed Lafontaine's Die Tochter der Natur, in which she played a simple farm girl, a role, she says, the audience was unaccustomed to seeing her play, since she lists her specialties as "Heldinnen und Liebhaberinnen im Trauerspiel (und) junge Weiber im Schau= und Lustspiel" (Bürger 13).

Bürger states that although she encountered some problems with other actors and actresses (the Reinhards) and was performing only small, secondary parts, her activities as an author were encouraged. Some of her friends persuaded her to write a piece in honor of Queen Charlotte's birthday. She does not name the work, but Die Überraschung (1801) is dedicated to the queen, eliminating any ambiguity. It was performed in Hannover but was not well-received and it was not given a repeat performance. Bürger does mention, however, that a copy of the play coincidentally reached Herr Meiers, the theater director in Stettin, and it was

performed there in honor of the Queen of Prussia (Bürger 21-22).

Confronting much criticism as an actress, Bürger continued to appear on the stage. One unpleasant performance took place in Celle. As she made her entrance, the stage was supposed to have been lit, but the person in charge of the lamps forgot to illuminate them. She staggered onto the stage, losing her balance in the dark, and states that she won applause only because of her courage to continue. Under fierce scrutiny from her fellow actors and theater critics, any mishap on the stage could lead to public ridicule and the loss of her position. Ironically, a similar misfortune occurs to one of Bürger's characters in the play Die Heiratslustigen (1801). Signora Zechini, a famous opera singer, is forced into prostitution as a result of her misfortune on the stage, which, according to Frevert, was not a rare occurance. After that night's performance, Bürger left her position with the theater.

Elise Bürger was a member of the courtly theater in Dresden from 1802 until 1807 (Eisenberg 138) and thereafter lived as a free actress, travelled, and appeared as a guest actress in many larger cities in Germany, Austria, and France (Kinder 176). She was accepted into the high society of the nobility and had many correspondences with the "greats" of her time. She earned money from her appearances and began to specialize in "das lebende Bild", from which she achieved her greatest level of success. She arranged

texts with music and lighting effects and her preferred material included recitations from Goethe, Schiller, and Bürger (Kinder 176). She also performed in the genre of living images or "die plastisch=mimische Darstellung," as it also came to be known, which consisted of living imitations of famous scenes in literature, paintings, or history, sometimes with recited texts in between, designed to be educational. One of Bürger's own works, Die antike Statue aus Florenz, is an example of the living image, as the character Laura takes on the characteristics of a classical statue. The images became popular and developed into short scenes, and Bürger portrayed ancient sculptures, scenes from the bible, and fantasy-pantomimes. In 1813, for instance, she portrayed a madonna figure from a work by Albrecht Dürer.

Bürger continued to play roles from Shakespeare, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, Iffland, and Kotzebue, but in 1809 she was labeled a "politically suspicious person" and was taken by the Viennese police to Hungary (Rotermund 301). In 1820 she moved to Frankfurt am Main and taught acting, but the number of students did not generate enough revenue so she turned to writing occasional poetry for the nobility and accepting money from benefactors, such as Frau Major von Fechenbach from Mainz, the Markgräfin von Baden, the crown princess from Prussia, and the empress of Austria. Rotermund, however, states in his 1823 biographical entry about Bürger that: "Jetzt nennt sie sich Professorin der

Declamirkunst, welcher Regent ihr aber das Rescript zu dieser Professur hat zusenden lassen, ist mir unbekannt" (Rotermund 301). According to Kinder, she kept her husband's title of Professor out of vanity, calling herself "Professorin der Deklamation." Although she had little money, she helped her stepson Emil, Bürger's son with Molly, gave free acting lessons, and bought meat and wood for a sick neighbor (Laddey 128-29), which discounts her husband's one-sided description of her as a self-serving squanderer.

Three years before her death in 1833, Elise Bürger began to go blind. After consulting her doctor, Dr. Schott, it was decided that the only method of treatment would be surgery at the eye clinic in Karlsruhe. Bürger's hopes were elevated, as she had a friend, Amalie Neumann-Haizinger, in Karlsruhe, to whom she promptly wrote a letter asking permission to visit during the surgery and to remain thereafter to give performances (Eisenberg 138). Bürger states: "In C. ist meine liebe Amalie N. . . . o, sie wird so glücklich sein, mich bei sich aufnehmen zu können! Doctor, lieber Doctor, ich bin so gut wie gerettet! . . ." (Laddey 128). When the reply came, Bürger was unable to read it and she sent for her student Hendrichs, who had a position with the nearby Frankfurt theater. The reply declined her request to visit, as her friend was travelling to perform a guest role. According to Laddey's article, Bürger sank back in her chair, speechless; she now realized that her career was over.

Although many critics claim Bürger's career was unsuccessful, the list of subscribers to her poetry, both among the nobility and otherwise, was not non-existent. Twenty-eight members of the nobility had subscriptions to her poetic works, including multiple copies, totaling 150 copies. Other subscribers numbered 278 and including multiple copies, a total of 340 copies sold, the revenue from which kept her fed, clothed, and housed.

Personal and professional descriptions of Elise Bürger vary. On a personal level, Therese Huber found her company quite enjoyable, while at the same time, Caroline Michaelis Böhmer Schlegel-Schelling scorned her and held her responsible for Bürger's death. On a professional level, Schiller wrote a letter from Weimar to Goethe in Jena on May 5, 1802, during the time Bürger was a guest performer in Weimar. He states: ". . . denn diese Elise ist eine armselige, herz- und geistlose Komödiantin von der ganz gemeinen Sorte, die durch ihre Ansprüche ganz unausstehlich wird." The criticism seems harsh but Schiller was known for his intolerance for actors (Kinder 175). After seeing Elise Bürger perform as the queen in Don Carlos, Schillers' friend Körner, on the other hand, reports on November 13, 1803: "Sie sah sehr gut aus, spielte mit Verstand und Feinheit und sprach auch im Ganzen nicht schlecht . . ." (Kinder 128). Wieland also spoke in her defense: "Ich weiß nicht . . . was die Heringsnasen in Weimar von ihr wollen; sie ist eine ganz eminente Peson (sic) und hat ein excellentes Ingenium"

(Ebeling 175). Part of the controversy regarding her performances presumably originated with the conflicting theatrical styles. Bürger played very naturalistically, as was the practice in Altona, Hannover, and Dresden, the prime locations of her experience, but in Weimar, the center of Classicism, the art of acting was rigid and associated with Greek and Roman antiquity (Kinder 175-76).

On November 24, 1833, 64 years and seven days old, Elise Bürger died. Only a few friends followed in her funeral procession, the Hofrat Barthy, her student Hendrichs, and her faithful maidservant. Her friends paid for her burial costs and Barthy wrote her obituary, which appeared in Didaskalia. Arthur Richel mentions that Barthy was one of the few who doubted Bürger's guilt in her failed marriage, and denounced the powerful prejudices against her. Her only prized possession, her autograph book, was left to her student Hendrichs.

ELISE BÜRGER'S WORKS

Elise Bürger's works consist predominantly of dramas, but she also produced novels, travel journals, diaries, and poetry. This analysis of five of her plays demonstrates how she shatters confining images set forth for women in a male-dominated society (see Appendix A for synopses). Bürger proposes alternative role models for both men and women, as her characters break away from mandatory domestication. Her works present strong, independent protagonists instead of those who are plagued with fainting spells and concerned only with their virtue. Although her characters possess virtuous qualities, Bürger does not focus on Tugend, Keuschheit, and Ohnmacht to demonstrate these qualities. Instead, she presents topics valuable to women in promoting autonomy and self-awareness, described by Jeannine Blackwell as "critical, republican, socialist, utopian, or feminist" (39).

Elise Bürger's heroines are strong, independent, capable women who do not need dominant male figures overlooking or protecting them. In fact, her protagonists defy, avoid, and even overtly criticize acts of dominance. Her male characters also uphold egalitarian ideals and allow women to exert their independence, and those male characters

who attempt to bring women under their control or who are obsessed with money, power, and greed, are ridiculed and inevitably become social outcasts.

Dagmar von Hoff provides a descriptive analysis of women's dramatic efforts in Dramen des Weiblichen: Deutsche Dramatikerinnen um 1800. Notable techniques used in women's works include presenting a female perspective, placing the locus of action in the woman's sphere, usually the home, creating female characters who speak for themselves, mixing genres, bouting Liebesmelancholie, and striving to maintain an intact family unit. When analyzing women's works one must also pay close attention to clothing, social class, victim/hero roles, power struggles, and the predominance of matriarchs or "enlightened" patriarchs. The term "enlightened" is used here to identify those who advocate freedom and equality for all people.

Based on a female body of works, von Hoff finds that women employ a range of different forms and themes but one thing remains constant, the presence of a female perspective:

> Gemeinsam ist ihren, daß in allen Dramen eine 'weibliche Perspektive' eingeführt wird, und zwar in dem Sinne, daß eine weibliche Figur im Mittelpunkt des dramatischen Geschehens steht . . . (von Hoff 43).

Some female authors only present heroines of a high social class, either queens, princesses, or other royal women; Elise Bürger, on the other hand, presents a wide range of social classes, which suggests a utopian, egalitarian ideal. Von Hoff suggests that by representing only the nobility, the author strives to create an elevated ideal for a better life (von Hoff 43-44). This can be seen especially in the genre of the Ritterschauspiel. By the nature of the characters' social class in the Ritterschauspiel, the dramas often take place in castles, as the castle becomes a protective wall against outside unpleasantness. This protection lends itself to the preservation and maintainance of the family unit (von Hoff 44, 50).

Another notable feature of women's works is the locus of action. Since most women (authors) in real life were not privy to the public sphere of their male counterparts, they typically choose the home (castle) as the center for activity in their works because of their familiarity in that sphere. Von Hoff summarizes this phenomenon thus:

> Die Burg [die private Sphäre] fungiert dabei als Ort der Geborgenheit, aber auch des Einschlusses. Fließende Zustände, Handlungsmomente erstarren und verhärten sich zum Bild der uneinnehmenbaren Burg mit festen Mauern . . . (von Hoff 69).

Another aspect of female dramas that distinguishes them from those of their male counterparts is that the heroines

speak for themselves, whereas heros are usually exalted by servants or advisors. Female characters in women's works typically characterize themselves in the form of conversations or in monologs, taking direct control of situations and conflicts. It is in these monologs that they reveal some type of suffering or victimization, usually at the hands of a male (von Hoff 44-45).

Furthermore, instead of writing tragedies or comedies, female authors tend to mix the two genres (as Schiller indicates), often including tragic elements but resulting in a happy ending. The final scene of women's works often signifies the triumph over conflict and the return of familial stability: "Diese Schluβtableau markiert das Ende des Stückes und fixiert weibliche Wunschvorstellungen eines Familienglücks . . ." (von Hoff 69).

Women authors also break with the typical construction of the male Ritterschauspiel, Götz von Berlichingen, for example, in which the favorite theme of two men fighting over one woman appears. The female Ritterschauspiel, such as Bürger's Adelheit, reverses this theme and, instead, two women compete for the same man. Other aspects to be considered in women's works are clothing, social class, victim/hero roles, and the presence of matriarchs or "enlightened" patriarchs, and language. By examining these aspects, the feminist scholar can recognize elements typically not present in men's works, which distinguish women's works and reinforce a female perspective. Each of

the aforementioned elements of women's works will be discussed as they pertain to the analysis of Bürger's plays.

Elise Bürger's single greatest literary success is her play Adelheit, Gräfin von Teck, Ritterschauspiel in fünf Aufzügen. In her analysis of the female version of the Ritterschauspiel, Dagmar von Hoff stresses that reversing typically male images and techniques the female author is underscoring her specifically female perspective. Instead of two men fighting over a woman, Bürger creates a situation in which two sisters, Adelheit and Marie, are in love with the same man, which is only part of the conflict. The other part stems from the fact that Adelheit has been separated from her family by her tyrannical father who forced her to marry a man she did not love. The resolution of the conflict begins when Adelheit's father dies, as does her husband, and Adelheit and her mother Elsbet come into power. By setting the drama in some non-specific time during the medieval period, Bürger seems to point out the extent to which women were able to attain power as part of their social class, such as Queen Laudine in Hartmann von Aue's Iwein, in contrast to a woman's position in her own society.

Another characteristic of the Ritterschauspiel is the presence of a female victim, but in women's works, the women usually overcome victimization. Adelheit is constructed as the victim when her father marries her off to the deplorable count of Teck, but when he dies and she returns home in hopes of rekindling her love for Georg, her sister Marie

assumes the victim role. Marie, who was sent to the convent by her father (another form of victimization according to Bürger), has returned home as well, but when she realizes that she cannot compete with Georg's love for Adelheit, she offers to return to the convent, thus sacrificing her own happiness.

Another element of the female drama is that the protagonists characterize themselves through conversations with the other characters, as suggested by von Hoff, rather than through exaltations of her character from servants or advisors. Adelheit is referred to as the "Herrin" of her land and subjects, and when Georg decides to honor his commitment to Marie, he states that Adelheit's manly temperament (männlicher Geist) will enable her to handle the pain. She does not, however, intend to carry out passively her female role and accept a fate decided for her, as she had in the past. Adelheit directly tells the audience of the victimization and tyranny she endured at the hands of her father and husband: "Man schleppte mich zum Altar, man gab mir einen Gemahl, den ich haβte. Vier Jahre lag ich im Kampf zwischen Pflicht und Liebe" (48). Her direct speech indicates that she does not need a spokesperson, reinforcing the validity of the female perspective; she has the ability to speak for herself.

Adelheit also recognizes that she is stronger than Marie and feels a responsibility to her sister and to her subjects:

> Bin ich nicht des Leidens längst Vertraute, bin stärker als Marie, habe einen Sohn, der die trüben Stunden seiner Mutter doch nicht freundenleer lassen wird, habe Pflichten gegen meine Unterthanen, die mich beschäftigen, zerstreuen werden . . . (49).

She also feels a responsibility for her own happiness and refuses to allow another man to rule her life:

> Ja, schon in den ersten Tagen meiner Wittwenschaft schickte Staffeneck eine Gesandschaft an mich; aber ich schlug seine Hand aus . . . weil ich nicht zum zweitenmale die Sklavin eines Tyrannen seyn wollte . . . (53).

Adelheit clearly states her dislikes. The opportunity to speak for oneself during the eighteenth century was not afforded to many women, while Bürger makes it possible within the constructed setting of the medieval period.

As the play progresses and Adelheit must return to Teck to protect her son, land, and subjects, she states with courage and fire: "Ich bin Mutter und meine Tecker lieben mich. Hört meinen Plan! Indeβ wir Feind in den Rücken fallen, geben wir den Burgleuten ein Zeichen zum Ausfall - " (64). After Conrad, Georg's fellow knight, hears Adelheit's plan, he states: "Weiber taugen nicht im Schlachtgetümmel! . . ." (64) to which Adelheit tells him that her son and land are at stake and she knows the area and the secret

paths. Most important, however, is her direct self-characterization: "Seh, ich bin stark, ich kann ein Schwerdt wohl führen. Mutterliebe wird mich zur Heldin machen . . . Schläfert die Löwin nicht ein, die für ihren Jungen kämpfen will . . . ich muβ ihn befreyen" (66).

Furthermore, when Stauffeneck and his men capture Adelheit and she is asked about her (her/his) identity, she retorts: "übrigens bin ich ein Ritter, ein freyer und ebenbürtiger Mann . . ." (87), indicating that her capabilities are no less than a man's, even though she is a woman, and she does not deserve any less freedom. Moreover, Wurst suggests that the very fact that Adelheit wears a suit of armor and assumes a "Hosenrolle," adds to the intrigue of the play, especially appealing to a voyeueristic element in the audience:

> . . . das (männliche) Publikum wird ebenfalls eine fast voyeuristisch zu nennende Faszination mit der Schauspielerin in einer Hosenrolle entwickeln. Denn die Frau in Hose und Wams wird ja weder zum adrogyn a-geschlichtlichen Wesen noch zu einer wirklich männlichen Erscheinung, sondern das Spiel mit der Verkleidung lenkt vielmehr die Aufmerksamkeit vor allem des weiblichen Körper, der sonst durch die Gegebenheiten der weiblichen Kleidung verdeckt ist (z. B. das sonst bedeckt und verhüllte Bein).

> Paradoxerweise betont die männliche Kleidung
> somit die weibliche Form . . . (Wurst 100).

When Adeleit's identity is discovered and Stauffeneck wants to have his way with her, she defends herself: "Weg mit deinen Händen! ich verlange deinen Brautkuβ nicht. Ehe verschlinge ich das Grab, als ich dein Weib werde! . . ." (90).

The mistrust for tyrannical men also surfaces when Ida and the other women take refuge at the hermit's home and she sings:

> . . . Drum Mädels, traut dem falschen Blick
> der schönen Männer nie!
> Sie scherzen nur mit eurem Glück,
> drum, Mädels, fliehet sie!
> Sonst heiβts: o weh! o weh! . . . (105).

A female perspective is further demonstrated when Adelheit is reunited with her son and her subjects after fighting to get to the castle. Adelheit is the one who tells the story of their triumph, reminiscent of storytelling in medieval epics: "Ich kam glücklich nach Augsburg, dort erfuhr ich die Belagerung meiner Burg und eilte selbst in dieser Kleidung mit dem Schwerdt in der Hand, meine Rechte zu vertheidigen . . ." (116). When the whole group is reuinited, Adelheit asks Georg to swear an oath to love and protect her son always and she makes the impending marriage contingent on the fulfillment of her wish.

Adelheit has fought side by side with Georg and she proves to herself that she can provide for and defend herself. Once she overcomes conflict by physically fighting in the war against male tyranny, she is ready to become Georg's wife, since the role of wife no longer threatens her autonomy or her son's safety. Bürger does not denounce typical female roles but she does denounce enforced domesticity. It is because of her role as mother that she is able to don courageously the male suit of armor and carry the typically male weapon, the sword. Adelheit is feminine yet she is also aggressive and assertive, and she is satisfied with the roles she chooses, not the roles chosen for her.

The victim role in this drama was originally played by Adelheit, but after her husband and father die she takes control of her own destiny. The victim role is then shifted to Marie, who was first victimized by being placed in the convent by her father and now plans to return because she cannot have Georg's love. She too takes control of her destiny to a certain extent, with her decision not to marry Conrad when he states: ". . .Laβt das Kloster den Büβerinnen und werdet ein braves Ritterweib!. . ." (137). Her reply indicates that she will no longer play a passive, victimized role in the cloister. Instead, she too, makes her own decision:

> Marie: ". . . Herr Ritter, Euer Antrag ehrt
> mich sonder Zweifel; aber ich kann nicht

so schnell zusagen, wie ihr werben. Die Zeit wird mich Euch näher kennen lernen und denn --"

Conrad: So laßt Ihr mir doch Hoffnung? - Ichdanke Euch und warte gern. . . (140).

Another common element of women's works, as von Hoff suggests, is that women authors create the castle or the home as a protective environment for women and their families. At the beginning of Adelheit, for instance, the family is not intact. Adelheit is a 30 hour's journey away in Teck and her brother Hans is missing. Once Adelheit returns and the family takes their separate routes to Teck, leaving the protection of the castle, conflict builds. Adelheit is captured by Stauffeneck's men and Elsbet, Marie, and Ida are betrayed by the hermit. The family is reunited in Teck, however, and the conflict which drove them apart is resolved. Conrad proposes marriage to Marie, saving her from self-sacrifice, Georg agrees to the terms Adelheit expects for marriage, and even the servants, Ida and Edgar, decide to marry, with the grand matriarch Elsbet blessing them all, as von Hoff summarizes:

> Diese Schlußtableau markiert das Ende des Stückes und fixiert weibliche Wunschvorstellungen eines Familienglücks. Die Burg fungiert dabei als Ort der Geborgenheit, aber auch des Einschlusses. Fließende Zustände, Handlungsmomente

> erstarren und verhärten sich zum Bild der uneinnehmenbaren Burg mit festen Mauern . . . (von Hoff 69).

The end of the drama brings several of the elements of women's works together simultaneously. The family unit is restored, the action takes place within the protective walls of the home (Adelheit's castle), women bear power positions, and conflict is overcome, which all support a female perspective.

The characterization of the Bürger's male characters is also important. Bürger constructs Georg and the Count of Stauffeneck as polar opposites. Georg represents all that is good, decent, and chivalrous. He is willing to abandon his love for Adelheit and honor his promise to Marie. Stauffeneck, on the other hand, destroys his knightly honor when he tries to take Adelheit by force. Georg is portrayed as Adelheit's partner and as such they battle side by side. Stauffeneck tries to exploit Adelheit, desiring her not for her love but for her money, land, and reproductive abilities. It seems that the idea of women being used as chattel is displeasing to Bürger and she chooses to communicate her feelings by criticizing practices of the Medieval period even though they were still practiced during her lifetime.

Particularly notable is how Stauffeneck becomes a social outcast after he is captured by Adelheit's allies. She pleads with the angry mob to show him mercy. But when

Georg offers Stauffeneck foregiveness, Stauffeneck tells him to go to the devil, and he is thereafter banished from the castle. Stauffeneck's greed earns him dishonor and ostracism, which is a device Bürger often uses when male characters who use force or deceit to achieve a goal become social outcasts.

The next analysis focuses on Bürger's Schauspiel Das Bouquet. The play is female-centered, focusing on the protagonist Amalie and the relationships with those around her. Bürger remains true to the favorite theme of men's literary works of two men fighting over a woman, but the difference exists in the fact that, similar to Adelheit, the protagonist maintains control of the situation.

From the very beginning of the play, Amalie's independent, outspoken character can be seen. Madam Blond, who is in charge of Amalie's education and upbringing, accuses her of interrupting and contradicting, two undesirable traits for women in the eighteenth century. Amalie, however, continues to express her views openly. For instance, when Madam Blond scolds her for frolicking in the fields, Amalie replies:

> Amalie: O so las mir doch die unschuldige Freude! Die Blumen waren von je her meine Lieblinge, und es ist so ein liebes natürliches Vergnügen, was der liebe Gott uns giebt! - Gewiß Bonnchen! wenn ich heirathe und Mutter werde, so will ich mich zwischen meine Kinder

> setzen und Blumen pflücken und Kränze mit ihnen winden.
>
> Juliette (Spöttisch): Aber der Teint, liebes Fräulein! der Teint wird bei dieser schönen Mutterbeschäftigung gewaltig leiden!
>
> Amalie: Wenn mein Mann mich liebt, wird es ihm einerlei sein, ob ich ein biβchen schwärzer bin oder nicht . . . (8).

Amalie has preconceived notions about marriage and how she wants to be treated and she does nothing to conceal her feelings. This can be seen especially when Juliette reveals that the Rittmeister has come to ask for Amalie's hand. Madam Blond states:

> Comment! was sagst Du Juliette! der Graf hat um Amaliens Hand gebeten und ohne erst zu mir zu kommen, da er weiβ, daβ ich Mutterstelle bei ihr vertrete! cela est impardonnable.

But Amalie retorts:

> Weiβt Du, Juliette! was ich unverzeihlicher finde? - daβ der Herr Graf nicht erst bei mir recognoscirt hat! . . . (9-10)

Bürger could very easily have written the character of Amalie as that of a victim, but instead, she seems to combat that image. Amalie's obvious distaste for not being consulted directly about her future would never be challenged by a character such as Emilia Galotti, but Bürger makes patriarchal authority over marriage an issue and she

remedies it through the bouquet competition, eliminating the dominant patriarch figure.

Bürger uses flowers as a metaphor for femininity to employ "typical" female characteristics to Amalie's advantage. Delicate, beautiful, fragrant, and petite are adjectives often used when describing flowers, which are also often used to describe women in men's works. Bürger recognizes the similarity and uses it as a means to demonstrate Amalie's cleverness to detect the intentions of the greedy suitors whose bouquets reveal how they will treat her after marriage. The Rittmeister's bouquet has many cultivated, beautiful flowers, yet their beauty is stifled when bound tightly with a sash and bow, bringing them under his control. Amalie recognizes that the same fate awaits her if she marries him. The Kammerjunker's bouquet is colorful, yet superficial, representing his true character and underlying reasons for marriage - power, money, and control. Both bouquets, therefore, are rejected.

Amalie is excited about the prospect of suitors and getting married but she refuses to marry someone who will treat her poorly. Her ideal suitor does exist, however, and he brings her a bouquet of wild, natural flowers, loosely kept near his heart. A marriage with Carl is not threatening to her because she sees how he will treat her as revealed through his treatment of the flowers. Bürger's metaphorical use of flowers serves as a mechanism to tear down the image of women as delicate, passive objects and,

instead, to use the image as a form of power. The flower as a metaphor for delicate womanhood is turned into a test by this woman to gauge the character of her suitors. The result is a portrayal of the female protagonists as outspoken, active partners, again representing a female perspective.

Another important element in women's works are the relationships of the protagonists with those around them. Amalie's relationship with Carl is one of mutual respect, as is her relationship with her father, which shatters typical images of male/female and father/daughter relationships represented in men's works in the eighteenth century.

Amalie's relationship with her father is also a sentimental one. Even when Amalie says "Punctum!" to her father, in her outspoken manner, he finds her endearing, because she reminds him of his deceased wife. He states that if his wife were still alive, he would not care if the war came to an end, he would welcome peace. When he becomes frustrated after reading a newspaper account which predicts the end of the war, he tells Amalie that he wishes she had been a son who could heroically fight and be the source of honor and pride for him. To this, Amalie replies that she has learned soldiers' activities: ". . .O Vater! Den Dienst kann ich wohl als Mädchen verstehen; unser seliger Heinrich hat mich exerciren gelehrt, wenn's die Madame nicht sah, und ich hatte eine groβe Freude daran. . ." (24). Her father patronizes her when they discuss her participation in

the gender-specific activity, but he also loves and respects her, admitting that she has him wrapped around her little finger.

In this play, Bürger tears down the superficial notion that physical attractiveness is a prerequisite for marriage. In her own experience, for example, she was not considered an appropriate spouse for Gottfried August Bürger until he had first evaluated his "merchandise", Elise Hahn, in person. Although Bürger had received a portrait of the raven-haired beauty, he was not satisfied because she did not resemble the golden-haired Molly, whom he still mourned, and suggested that she powder her hair, as the superficial Kammerjunker had done in this play. Bürger's personal experience with the superficiality of appearance as a prerequisite for marriage only supports her position when she tears that image down in this work. The powder in the Kammerjunker's hair, the strong perfume he wears, and his Parisian dancing shoes, however superficially impressive, do not make him a suitable marriage partner for Amalie nor do they make him a good person. In fact, he moans about how boring she is, remarking on her plainness, whereas he, on the other hand, is pretentious and flambouyant. He only wants to marry her for her fortune: "Das Mädchen ist hübsch, - aber fade, sehr fade. Nur ihr Geld ist bon, tres bon! . . ." (41).

Carl, on the other hand, appears with Amalie's favorite flowers, which are wild, natural, and unbound. Physical

appearance, a main concern of the Kammerjunker, is of little relevance to her, since Carl's face has been badly scarred in the war. Control, a concern of the Rittmeister, is of little importance to Carl, for he accepts Amalie's marriage proposal, an atypical act for a woman in the eighteenth century. After seeing the flowers Carl brings, she knows he will treat her with respect, just like he treats the beautiful flowers.

Similar to the Kammerjunker, the Rittmeister also finds fault with Amalie. He refers to her as "naseweis," indicating to her father that he would modify her behavior. He intends to bring Amalie under his control just as he does the bouquet. His only interest in her is as a reproductive vessel rather than as a marriage partner.

The manner in which each of the two suitors obtain their bouquets indicates another part of their character which would not deem them good husband material. Neither the Kammerjunker nor the Rittmeister picked or chose their bouquets themselves. The Kammerjunker obtained his bouquet through questionable means, by having his servant steal it, and the Rittmeister had his servants assemble his bouquet from the flowers in his greenhouse. This occurs even after Amalie tells them that natural flowers in the fields are the most beautiful; they proceed to obtain their bouquets artificially and superficially.

Amalie's bouquets serve as a mechanism to test how the suitors intend to treat her. From their treatment of the

bouquets, one would predict that neither suitor will pay attention to what she says, even when her message is clear (her preference for fresh, wild flowers). Moreover, this also suggests that the Kammerjunker is likely to be deceitful and the Rittmeister will be likely to abandon her to be cared for by the servants. Carl, on the other hand, is completely unaware of the competition and appears with Amalie's favorite flowers, reinforcing the natural (as opposed to artificial) love they will share.

Again, the setting and ending of the play, as well as an intact family, are important in portraying a female perspective typically found in women's works. The setting for the play is the heroine's home, here the Obrist's castle. After Amalie rejects the bouquets from the two suitors, they are forced to leave the source of protection, safety, and comfort for the (re)united family. Similar to what Elsbet had done in Adelheit, Amalie's father, an "enlightened" patriarch who refuses to force his daughter into marriage, blesses the union between Amalie and Carl. Carl's return marks the end of the war and restores the family unit, resulting in a happy ending.

Accompanying Das Bouquet is the Nachspiel Die Heiratslustigen. In this work Elise Bürger touches on democratic ideals, which were highly popular before and after the French Revolution and also inspired by the independence from the British found in the "New World." This quasi-Robinsonade revolves around a group of betrothed

couples who sail off to the West Indies to create new destinies based on freedom and democracy.

This farsical play is entertaining but it also describes the substantial effects of the revolution on different classes of people, particularly the lower and middle classes. Unlike Bürger's other dramas, it has no central female protagonist. Instead, it describes the story of an English lord who, in the tradition of many male utopias, wants to start a new colony in the West Indies. His patriarchal behavior at the beginning of the play is eliminated at the end by his own participation with the other couples.

The interviews each candidate must undergo at the inn in Amsterdam in order to be accepted for the journey reveal the effects of the revolution on each character and how they decide to deal with their own situations. The equal number of men and women, the equal opportunity for each of them to begin their lives anew, as well as the equal amount of money they receive for their participation indicates Bürger's utopian, egalitarian ideas. Only once does a power struggle take place and it occurs between a maid and her former rich employer-turned-missionary. The incident elicits the following response from Seiber: "Im Himmelreich sind wir so alle gleich . . ." (106).

Although the emphasis is not on marriage for love and partnership, as indicated in Bürger's other works, the candidates each enter into the marriages on their own

vol

mar

one

wi

gi

go

bu

ex

co

W

o

s

i

r

s

t

i

b

b

pl

a

un

lo

of

end

volition via a lottery, rather than being forced into marriage by a dominant father figure. The father figure, if one is to be identified, Lord Seiber, tells them that fate will decide whom they marry.

Again, Bürger remains true to a female perspective by giving her characters occupations, such as a chambermaid, a governess, a saleswoman, an opera singer, and ballet dancer, but they are not highly respected by society. With the exception of the governess, each woman wants to leave the country and marry to pursue and improve her career in the West Indies, not to give themselves over into the servitude of their husbands. Marriage, often a potentially confining situation, promises instead to allow them to pursue the ideals of the revolution, that each person is a thinking, reasoning, creature with basic human rights which are not specific to the social class into which they were born. The trip to the West Indies, or as they refer to it, "Amerika," is significant, for in the land of opportunity and new beginnings the forthcoming marriages need not be confining, but rather liberating.

The setting, happy ending, and the intact family all play a part in Die Heiratslustigen. This play is not set in a fortress or a castle with strong walls to keep unpleasantness away, instead Bürger sets the stage at a local inn, a common meeting place or "home" for the classes of people she writes about. As in the other plays, a happy ending results when the Seiber himself becomes a participant

and his "family" unit is complete with the arrival of Jungfrau Fröhlich, whom he intends to marry. In keeping with the tradition of the utopia genre, in which all members of a society are equal, all the participants sing praises and bless themselves rather than being blessed by a figurehead:.

Sind wir in Amerika,
Wollen frei wir leben,
mit den lieben Säcken da
uns den Wohlstand geben;
jeder nimt sein Weib in Arm,
Geld und Liebchen winken;
frei von Sorgen, frei von Harm
Wollen wir dort trinken! . . . (129).

The next play, Die Überraschung, could be classified as a family portrait, one of the types of Trivialliteratur Schiller found most disgraceful. It was written in honor of Queen Charlotte's birthday in 1801. The main action takes place at Frau Marthe's modest home in the country and concerns the marriages of her four daughters. Another family is represented as well, the noble family Lindheim, for whom Marthe worked as a wet nurse. In this play, Bürger praises motherhood across all social levels. Again, the female characters directly communicate their own valuable characteristics. Marthe's abilities as a mother are lauded, as are those of Sophie, and Bürger goes one step further and directly compliment's Queen Charlotte's abilities as well.

One of the main characters, Sophie, is characterized through conversations with her parents. Sophie's husband Fritz has been gone for several months and her feeling of loss on her wedding anniversary is consoled by her father who characterizes her as a strong heroine: "Unsre Sophie ist stark. Siehst du, meine Heldinn weint nicht! . . ." (18). Her mother consoles her by stating: "Gott wird ja ein so gutes treues Weib wie du bist, nicht elend machen . . ." (19).

Sophie is mourning the loss of Fritz, which von Hoff suggests is common in women's works, when protagonists are forced to marry men they do not love, or when a long separation between partners occurs. The forced marriages or separations can lead to a state of Liebesmelancholie. For instance, when Adelheit thinks Georg has been killed in the battle, she prays that she can die as well so they can be together eternally. Likewise, Sophie states: "Gott! Wenn du meine Thränen siehst, so erbarme dich meines Jammers! Laβ ein treues liebendes Weib ihren Gatten wieder finden. Gieb meinen Kindern ihren Vater wieder, oder laβ mich mit ihm sterben! . . ." (24).

The female perspective can also be seen in Marthe's actions and self-characterization. Marthe is protective and directly characterizes herself as being strict when she tries to protect her daughters from over-anxious suitors: "Aber ich habe sie gehütet wie meine Augen, und alle junge Bursche fürchten sich vor mir . . ." (7).

The recurring theme of single parenthood and the self-reliance of women also seems to be important to Bürger, since she too, was a single parent. Marthe's husband died when her youngest daughter was two years old and she is faced with the sole responsibility of raising their four daughters. Other examples of single parents in Bürger's works are Elsbet, Adelheit, and the Obrist von Weng.

Even though Marthe is a single mother she knows that she has been a good mother but her only regret is that she cannot provide dowries for her four daughters. Sophie's husband Fritz considers Marthe's role in Sophie's life valuable, and he enters the picture to provide what she lacks, ample money for each daughter. Marthe does not recognize Fritz but accepts his generous offer because she has no other way of providing dowries for her daughters, which brings about the happy ending.

Furthermore, the protection of the home and the intact family also contribute to the happy ending. Although there is no castle to protect the family unit from the outside unpleasantness as in the Ritterschauspiel, Marthe's modest home takes its place. When Fritz returns to Sophie, their family is intact. Similarly, when Marthe's daughters begin their married lives, unity in her family is achieved as well. Furthermore, Bürger's democratic ideas can be seen in the the connection between the noble and lower class families, reinforced by the mother/daughter relationship between Marthe and Sophie's and the presence of the two

families celebrating the birthday of the queen together. Louise, Sophie's mother, another matriarch, praises the queen and asks that she bestow a blessing on the gathering:

> O möge Sie, die stets mein Vorbild war, deren häusliche Tugenden die Anbetung Ihrer Unterthanen verdient, jetzt in diesem Augenblick, von der Höhe Ihres Throns einen Blick auf unseren kleinen Zirkel zurück werfen, und sehen, wie innig und herzlich ein Häuschen guter Menschen Sie verehrt . . . (25).

Rather than having separate celebrations of the queen's birthday, the two families come together as a single unit, and the Obrist of Lindheim and his wife bless them all, bringing the play to an end.

The final play, Die antike Statue aus Florenz (1815), is the last of Elise Bürger's plays. Written in alexandrine verse, Bürger adopts a style which alludes to classicism. Images of beauty in Statue venerate classical art and suggest them as examples. The protagonist's husband Ludwig is constantly engaged in activity tied to classical art in the secret, yellow room. Rather than passively watch her marriage crumble, Laura goes to the room, learns its secret, and regains the love of her husband. Ludwig's obsession with classical art has caused him to discard his wife. But by challenging the fact that women are often evaluated by societal norms rather than personal merit, Laura breaks down

this "reality" and regains the love of her husband. Some may argue that Laura's methods to regain her husband, such as dressing as the statue to conform to societal norms, but it is by conforming that she is able to bring her husband to a new "reality" that does not judge women as objects or hold them up to art as examples.

At first, Laura is willing to accept her husband's behavior and go to her uncle, but her sister compels her to realize that her husband is embracing intellectual values, and in order to break the tradition to which he has fallen victim, she must dress as the statue to regain his love and respect. It is because of this conflict that she can confidently pronounce: "Mein Spiegel sagt mir doch, ich sey nicht schlecht gebaut / Nun denn, o Laura, einmal nur dir selbst vertraut! . . ." (17-18). She accepts and desires her role as a wife, but she does not accept being compared to lifeless objects.

Laura rejects being compared to an ideal of the perfect woman and she shatters the ideal, calling it a "kalte Puppe." Ironically, the statue, or the ideal, literally shatters into dust. Bürger calls the play a Scherzspiel, in hopes of attracting an audience to a humorous play while veiling a message about the subjugation of women conforming to men's ideals. Ludwig is convinced that only things classical or coming from Antiquity are beautiful and worth adoration.

This play addresses the issue of men imagining women as more than the human beings that they are. A man's fantasy of how a woman should be, is, in this case, nothing short of perfection. She must have a perfect body, perfect upbringing and perfect breeding. When this image breaks down and Ludwig realizes that Laura is not perfect, he is drawn to his ideal of perfection, the classical statue:

> Doch ist sie gar nicht schön, sie hat gemeine
> Formen,
> Kein hohes Ebenmaβ, sie paβte zu Herrn Ormen.
> Hätt der sie nur gefreyt, das wär wohl noch
> ein Paar!
> Zwar liebte damals ich ach, schon sind es
> sechs Jahr -
> An ihr Tugend Reiz, doch der ist längst
> vergangen,
> Jetzt ist mein Aug' gewöhnt an edleres
> Verlangen . . . (8).

When he sees her as the statue, however, he marvels at her beauty, praising the same qualities he previously maligned.

The dialog in this play represents a female perspective in that it predominantly revolves around Laura and her sister. When Laura resolves to abandon her marriage, her sister provides her with support and encourages her to take charge of the situation rather than give up: "Erobre Deinen Mann zum zweitenmal als Stein / Du sollst sein Ideal bis zum Verlieben seyn . . ." (21). After Ludwig realizes what he

has done to his wife, he makes the following vow: "Ja, ja, ich bin es ganz, bin hochbeglückt / Durch solche zarte List bezaubert und entzückt / Ich schwöre Dir, ich suche nimmer fremde Formen . . ." (27).

Bürger's message is far from clandestine when Laura's sister Rosaura gives advice to other women by speaking directly to the audience:

> Ihr Damen! Beispiel nehmt an diesem
> Frauenzimmer
> Zeigt euren Männern euch in neuen Formen
> immer.
> Der Neuheit Reiz, und wär er manchmal auch
> geborgt,
> Ist einzig nur die Fee, der Männersinn
> gehorcht . . . (19).

One might argue that by overtly telling her female audience to constantly change to please her man, she is accepting male expectations. But one must remember that the genre employed here is a Scherzspiel and by directly telling her female audience to please her man, she may be poking fun at the ridiculousness of the situation, hence giving an opposite, covert message. The final result is Ludwig's oath never to take his wife for granted or to seek pleasure in other forms; the end result, therefore, justifies the means by which it was achieved.

After Ludwig comes to his senses and makes his vow to his wife, Rosaura's pronouncement ends the play: "Ich kränze sie, die ist antik, modern und ewig schön" (28). Restoring the relationship between Laura and Ludwig brings the family together, in the same manner as Bürger's other plays, resulting in a happy ending within the protective walls of the home.

Both overt and covert messages are revealed in Elise Bürger's works. The works themselves and the forms they take resist the accepted, dominant literary style and create a new, innovative medium used to reveal her covert messages. The theater-goer who plans to see a Scherzspiel may see only the apparent, humorous message, in the case of Statue, that women can be conniving, manipulative creatures. But the same theater-goer may be completely oblivious to the covert message that freedom and equality are basic rights to which all people are entitled, irrespective of gender, and furthermore, that women, as well as art, should not be held up to unrealistic, arbitrary ideals. It could be argued that by keeping her messages covert, Bürger's efforts were in vain. But by overtly challenging the status quo, any chance for her works to be read or performed might be eradicated, which would endanger her primary goal, to generate enough money to earn a living.

rev
cor
one
bet
Sec
is
pat
rul
bei
of

oft
in
mal
wor
Ade
non-
Ade
a sc
allo
was

CONCLUSION

In summary, a close reading of Elise Bürger's works reveal three themes. First, marriage should be a non-confining institution. Women should marry according to one's own choice instead of for money or a good union between families decided by a domineering patriarch. Second, freedom, equality, and democracy are valued. This is seen in the presence of matriarchs or "enlightened" patriarchs rather than male-dominated, family and political rule. And third, men and women should be viewed as human beings, rather than members of a social class or as objects of beauty.

One of Bürger's central themes is marriage, which is often portrayed by authors as an institution of domination in the eighteenth century. However, when a successful male/female relationship is portrayed in Elise Bürger's works, the couple works together as a team, as in the dramas Adelheit and Die Überraschung. Bürger uses marriage as a non-confining institution in all five of the plays. Adelheit's first marriage was arranged by her father to form a solid union between families and territories. She was not allowed to choose her husband and she states how unhappy she was as a result. Women's desire to speak for themselves or

protect themselves against a "good union" in the absence of love was often denied them, but Elise Bürger makes it possible for Adelheit. This is demonstrated, as von Hoff suggests, by the female character taking charge of her own destiny through direct, active, self-characterization. At the end of the play when Adelheit marries Georg, it is a marriage motivated by love and mutual respect, not by land or power.

The marriage theme appears again in Das Bouquet as Amalie seeks to determine whom she will marry. She does not want to marry either of the two suitors after she discovers how they intend to treat her. Her father, unlike Adelheit's, declares that he will not force her to marry any man, including the one he has in mind for her, if she does not love him. Her freedom of choice makes marriage a non-confining situation. When Carl arrives with his natural, non-threatening bouquet, Amalie enters into a marriage with a childhood friend and partner.

The marriage in Statue is initially confining. After confiding in her sister about her discontent with her marriage, Laura realizes that she and her husband loved each other deeply at one time, and she aggressively decides to recapture that love. But when her husband compares her to the classical beauty of a statue, with which she feels she will never compare favorably, she conforms to the ideal only to force him to realize that his obsession with classical art is impractical and limiting. Instead of forcing her to

continue imitating the statue, Laura's husband realizes the beauty of the woman he married, changing the status of their marriage from confining to liberating.

The marriage theme in Die Überraschung is demonstrated through the love of Marthe's oldest daughter Lieschen and her beau Töffel. They have little money but Töffel earns an honest living and they want to marry for love and partnership as they state:

> Töffel: . . . denn ein ehrlicher Schäferknecht bin ich all mein Lebstage gewesen, und arbeiten kann ich noch nebenbei, also -
>
> Lieschen: Ach was also! - ich habe auch zwei Hände und bin jung und stark . . . (9).
>
> Töffel: Lieschen Du bist meine tausend Thaler . . . (21).

Other non-confining marriages can be found in Die Überraschung such as those of Marthe's other daughters, the marriage between Sophie and Carl, and the marriage between the king and queen.

The marriage theme is prominent in Die Heiratslustigen, as the title suggests. The participants in the trek to the West Indies are not marrying for love, however, but rather to liberate themselves from a repressive, chaotic world at the time of the French Revolution. They give up their right to choose their spouses and regard their upcoming marriages as partnerships in order to start their lives anew, separate from the vicious practices of the male world.

The second theme in Bürger's plays is freedom and equality among all people, especially exemplified by matriarchies or "enlightened" patriarchies. The two matriarchs in Adelheit, Adelheit and her mother Elsbet, prove that they can survive after they are widowed. Both women assume their own destinies by accepting their roles as rulers. Adelheit fights to maintain her autonomy and she and her mother curse the oppressive man, Adelheit's father, who forced Adelheit to wed a tyrant. When challenged by Stauffeneck, she states: "übrigens bin ich ein Ritter, ein freyer und ebenbürtiger Mann . . ." (87). She dresses as a man only to defeat one, another example of a reversed image.

The widowed matriarch Marthe in Die Überraschung, alone cares for her four daughters on a meager income. The presence of a woman as head of the household perhaps suggests Bürger's opinion that one can maintain a household without dominating its inhabitants, which reinforces Blackwell's assertion that women's works are often "critical, republican, socialist, utopian, or feminist" (Blackwell 39).

The enlightened patriarch of Das Bouquet is Amalie's father, the Obrist von Weng. Rather than force his daughter to marry only for the sake of uniting two families or territories, he listens to his strong-minded daughter and respects her decisions. He also listens to the servant Jeremis, rejecting Madam Blond's superficiality and lies in her attempt to incriminate the servant. Another Patriarch,

Lord Seiber, provides equality, freedom, and a sense of democracy for the "Heirathslustigen" as they embark on a journey to the new world in hopes of improving their lives. Each couple must give up its choice of a spouse to the lord, in a typical patriarchal manner reminiscent of utopias written by men. But the difference exists in the lord's participation with them rather than ruling over them; he becomes a member of the group, alluding to utopian ideals. All the people come from different parts of Europe, they all receive the same amount of money, they give up their right to choose a spouse, and they sail on to "Amerika" to form a new colony and a new fate. Living freely, among people of other nationalities, races, and ages contributes to this egalitarian ideal theorized by the "great" thinkers of Elise Bürger's time but, ironically, in reality did not apply to women. In her works, however, egalitarian ideals do apply.

The third theme Bürger addresses is judging men and women based on their appearance. Bürger's drama, Das Bouquet conveys her view that women should be able to carry out their chosen roles as housekeeper, wife, and mother, according to their natural inclinations for these roles. Amalie states:

> Wenn ich heirathe und Mutter werde, so will ich mich zwischen meine Kinder setzen und Blumen pflücken und Kränze mit ihnen winden . . . wenn mein Mann mich liebt, wird es ihm einerlei sein,

ob ich ein bischen schwärzer bin oder nicht . . . (8).

Bürger's de-emphasis of appearance suggests that women are not superficial trinkets to be admired. Amalie refuses to be treated as merely a beautiful decoration designed for the pleasure and enjoyment of a man. The condition of her complexion, whether it be flawless or tanned by the sun should not be a determining factor for marriage. She rejects the Kammerjunker as a husband even though he is handsome, and instead she marries Carl, whose face has been badly scarred in the war.

Even more illustrative of Bürger's de-emphasis on the importance of beauty is her depiction of Madam Blond, who, along with the Kammerjunker, constantly gaze at their reflections in the mirror. Madam Blond and the Kammerjunker's reflections, however, merely hide the deplorable people behind them; Bürger attempts to shatter this image, and at the same time, criticizes a repressive, superficial society. Yet another instance of women as objects of beauty occurs in Statue, when Laura's husband Ludwig imposes unrealistic standards on his wife by comparing her to a classical statue. By using his expectations Laura destroys the confining image of perfection he imposes on her.

From her dramas, Elise Bürger suggests alternative images for women which represent strength, free will, independence, and egalitarian thinking rather than the

typical female traits of virtue, chastity, dependence and weakness so often portrayed by her male counterparts.

Elise's Bürger's works challenge the status quo yet they still remain within the framework of societal norms. She represents women as mothers, daughters, and wives functioning within society. She does not, however, use these roles as a means to relegate women to the home, dependent on their husbands and fathers to think for them. Instead, she projects alternative images for female roles within social institutions such as marriage. These images are perhaps not extraordinary to a modern audience but possibly too defiant for her time. Her defiance, in combination with her reputation, may have kept her from reaching the same popularity as Elise von der Recke or Bettina von Arnim. But the standards and limitations imposed on her and her works in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries should not continue to be imposed in the twentieth century and beyond.

By shattering weak and dependent images of women, Bürger proposes new, equal roles that were not available to her in her own marriage and profession. She proposes roles which could serve to break the tradition of an idealized, expected, and enforced domesticity for those women who would succeed her. Therefore, it is only by exploring the gaps in the German literary and social history that one can find the misconceptions and misrepresentations of female authors. Furthermore, by reading women's works from a feminist

perspective, this exploration can shatter constructed, prescriptive, domestic images of women often valorized in the accepted canon.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SYNOPSES OF ELISE BÜRGER'S WORKS

ADELHEIT GRÄFIN VON TECK, RITTERSCHAUSPIEL IN FÜNF AUFZÜGEN (1799) was reprinted three times, translated into Dutch, and performed in both Altona and Celle. It takes place some time in the Medieval period. The play opens with the gardener, Valentin, tending to his flowers. Soon, his daughter Ida and Marie, the daughter of the deceased Bürgermeister von Augspurg, return from picking flowers and herbs. Ida notices that Marie has been quite lovesick ever since Georg, the Graf von Hechingen, was wounded and has since been recovering in her family's castle. Marie admits that she is in love with Georg but has little hope of winning his affections since he was once in love with her sister Adelheit. In spite of herself, Marie cannot help her feelings and sends the servant Ida to Georg with the basket of flowers she has picked, which includes one single rose. She warns Ida not to let Georg know that she loves him as anything more than a brother because she is not ready to reveal her true feelings. Through Marie and Ida's discourse, the audience discovers that Adelheit, the protagonist, was married off four years earlier to the Graf

von Teck by her now deceased father. Teck being a 30 hour journey away, Marie is sad that she has not seen her sister in such a long time. Similarly, Georg misses Adelheit and is sitting in adoration of her picture when he receives the flowers from Marie. He is lamenting that he will never have the love of his life because she is another man's wife when he receives the flowers from Marie. When his servant Edgar, who, incidentally, is in love with Marie's servant Ida, mentions that flowers from a woman usually mean more than friendship, Georg declares that Marie is worth a better fate than to love a man who loves another woman, especially her sister.

In the next scene, Ida and Marie's mother Elsbet comfort Marie, as she has just seen the single rose she had given Georg discarded on the ground. Elsbet explains to Marie that her husband, the former Bürgermeister, is to blame for Georg's moodiness. She tells Marie:

> Du bist mein einzig übrig gebliebenes Kind.
> Ist nicht Adelheit, meine Erstgeborene, dem
> Starrsinn ihres harten Vaters geopfert . . .
> ich sah sie in Todesangst und aus Gehorsam
> mit dem bösartigen Grafen von Teck wegziehen;
> ich habe sie verloren und weiβ sie
> unglücklich . . . (23).

Elsbet also reveals to the audience how her evil, covetous husband sent Marie to the convent to become a nun, leaving only her son Hans behind. But one day Elsbet allowed Hans

to go fishing outside the protection of the castle walls, never to be seen again. After her brother's disappearance, Marie was rescued by her mother from the cloister to live again happily with her family, but she has become unhappy ever since the advent of Georg's recuperation there. Marie reveals to her mother that she loves Georg and Elsbet takes it upon herself to talk with him since she, too, loves him and would like him for a son. Just as Elsbet plans to talk to Georg, the Pater Ignaβ arrives with a letter for Georg. But after hearing Elsbet's plans to discuss marriage possibilities with Georg, the Pater is elated and decides the letter can wait.

Elsbet goes to Georg and intercedes for her daughter, and Georg agrees to the marriage since he knows he will never have Adelheit. Just as the Pater gives Georg the letter, Ida and Edgar hurry in to tell Elsbet that a woman in widow's clothing has arrived and wants to see her. As the suspense builds, the stranger is revealed as Adelheit. She recounts that she heard from Georg's trusted friend Conrad that he was wounded and in his delirium had often called her name and was compelled to return home. Adelheit is reuinited with her mother and wants to see Georg, unaware of the events which took place only minutes before, the engagement of Marie and Georg. With this, the first act comes to an end.

In the second act, the Pater realizes the importance of the letter he was to deliver to Georg, which explained that

Adelheit had been widowed. Georg is distraught at the news, to which the Pater advises that he return to his homeland and write each woman a letter making his intentions known. After realizing the truth, Adelheit, too, is distressed, stating sorrowfully to her mother:

> Meine Mädchenjahre trübte der Anblick Eurer Leiden und die Härte meines Vaters! Man schleppte mich zum Altar, man gab mir einen Gemahl, den ich haßte. Vier Jahre lag ich im Kampf zwischen Pflicht und Liebe; jetzt nach tausend ausgestandenen Leiden, nach unzählichen ummervollen Stunden, träumte mich dem Glück im Schooße, eile hieher - und ach! welche Verwirtung hab ich hier angerichtet! Mein eigener Schmerz, Georgs Leiden und die arme Marie alles zerreißt mir das Herz! . . . (43).

Her mother comforts her just as Adelheit has a vision of her son Carl in grave danger and she falls to the floor. She explains that he was unable to accompany her because of the 30 hour journey and she was afraid he would not fare well and therefore left him with his nurse. Moments later, the Pater rejoins the women and apologizes to Adelheit for his unhasty delivery of the letter to Georg. When Adelheit asks who wrote the letter, the Pater replies that it was the Kellermeister in Stauffeneck. When Adelheit hears the name, she explains her experience with the Graf von Stauffeneck:

> Ja, schon in den ersten Tagen meiner Witwenschaft schickte Stauffeneck eine Gesandtschaft an mich; aber ich schlug seine Hand aus. Er sandte vor einigen Wochen nochmals, und ich benahm ihm alle Hofnung, weil ich nicht zum Zweitenmale die Sklavin eines Tyrannen seyn wollte, und weil ich mir damals das Glück der Liebe in Georgs Armen so schön dachte . . . (53).

In the meantime, Georg writes the sisters each a letter. He declares his eternal love for Adelheit but tells her that knightly honor dictates that he must honor his betrothal and marry Marie. His letter to Marie states that whatever she decides, he will abide by it and, again, proposes marriage.

After receiving Georg's letter, Marie decides to return to the convent because she knows how much Adelheit and Georg love each other. At the same time, Adelheit decides to give up hope of ever becoming Georg's wife because she has already been married, has a son, and does not want to deprive her sister of her happiness. But just as the sisters argue about who should be with Georg, Conrad arrives with another letter from the Kellermeister of Stauffeneck stating that the Count of Stauffeneck is taking Adelheit's castle by force and intends to capture her son as a means to hasten their marriage in order to usurp her land, power, and autonomy; Adelheit's vision of her son in danger becomes a reality. After Conrad states that he intends to obtain

Georg to join in the fight, Adelheit states that she, too, is going back to Teck:

> Ich bin Mutter und meine Tecker lieben mich. Hört meinen Plan! Indeβ wir den Feind in den Rücken fallen . . . Mit Georg und Euch will ich fechten; ihr kennt die Gegend nicht, ich weiβ alle Schliche . . . einen unterirrdischen Gang, alle Zugänge; Seh ich bin stark, ich kann ein Schwerdt wohl führen. Mutterliebe wird mich zur Heldin machen . . . (66).

When the Pater and Adelheit's mother protest her departure, she retorts:

> Still, Pater, still! Schläfert die Löwin nich ein, die für ihre Jungen kämpfen will! . . . Ich muβ ihn befreyen . . . Meine Lösungs=Wort sei Mutterliebe! . . . (66-67).

Her departure ends the second act.

In the third act, Adelheit journeys to Teck to reclaim her land and ensure the safety of her son. On the way, she meets up with Stauffeneck and his soldier who are holding Adelheit's brother Hans prisoner. Stauffeneck, seeing her in a suit of armor, mistakes her for a spy because her size and voice are not those of a warrior, but Adelheit retorts: "übrigens bin ich ein Ritter, ein freyer und ebenbürtiger Mann . . ." (87). When Stauffeneck lifts her visor and discovers her identity, he threatens to kill her brother right before her eyes unless she agrees to marry him. Just

as the evil count is about to harm Hans, Conrad and Georg appear and save them from a gloomy fate. Georg accompanies his beloved and her brother while Conrad continues to fend off Stauffeneck, which ends the third act.

The fourth act begins as Elsbet impatiently waits for news from Teck. Unable to wait any longer, she, Ida, and Marie also depart for Teck. As they make their way through the forest, they come upon a hermit, a trusted friend of the Pater. He takes them in and discovers their identities, and reveals through an aside that the hermit they were sent to, Bruder Jakob, is dead. This man, Bruder Michel, leaves the women to tell Stauffeneck's men about his guests in hopes of earning a reward, leaving the women to be captured. In the meantime, the people in charge of Adelheit's castle are discussing the best plan to keep her son safe from the recurring attacks of Stauffeneck's soldiers. They discuss fleeing through the secret, underground passage into the tower, where they can avoid the attacks. They hear voices and footsteps and think they will soon meet their fate, but it is Georg, Adelheit, and Hans instead of Stauffeneck's men. Adelheit explains to her loyal subjects that they had worked two days and nights to climb the tower to safety and block off the passageway to the tower to hinder any enemies. Adelheit is then reunited with her beloved son and Georg accepts Carl as his own. Adelheit and Georg discuss marriage plans, but Adelheit will not marry him until he swears an oath witnessed by her Tecks that if anything

happens to her he will always love and protect Carl as his own son, which brings act four to a joyful end.

The fifth act begins at sunrise the next morning. The castle and the forces of Teck have been weakened and Georg decides to rejoin the fight, leaving Adelheit distressed because they have just been reunited. After surveying the damage, the castle guard reports to Adelheit that Georg has been wounded. She states that she wants to join him and imagines him dead. Minutes later, news comes that the Georg is in fact alive. He arrives with Conrad and Edgar, who report that Stauffeneck's men have been overcome and that Stauffeneck himself has been taken prisoner. Adelheit insists that Stauffeneck be pardoned and Georg instructs the guards to treat him humanely, to which Stauffeneck tells Georg to go to the devil. After the prisoner is taken away, Conrad mentions that three other people were found in the tower and wants to know what to do with them: Elsbet, Ida, and Marie!

Upon reuniting, Marie realizes that Georg and Adelheit plan to marry and she declares that she will return to the convent. Adelheit implores her not to and Conrad interjects with a marriage proposal. Marie is surprised but states that she cannot marry a man whom she does not know. She does agree, however, not to go to the convent and to allow Conrad to court her, after which he states that he will gladly wait. Edgar and Ida also declare their marriage intentions and the entire group gathers around the grand

matriarch, Elsbet, as she embraces and blesses them, ending the play.

SÄMTLICHE THEATRALISCHE WERKE (1801) includes the Lustspiel DAS BOUQUET and the Schwank DIE HEIRATHSLUSTIGEN. They were performed in 1802 in Mannheim.

DAS BOUQUET, SCHAUSPIEL (1801) is a two-act play which, like many of Elise Bürger's works, has marriage as a central theme. The protagonist, Amalie, is the only child of the widowed Obrist von Weng. She is being educated by the Hofmeisterin, Madam Blond, a vain, pretentious woman who seeks to rear Amalie according to the norms and expectations of society. As the play opens, Madam Blond is eating bon bons and admiring her complexion in the mirror when she states to the servant Juliette:

> Eine feine, weiβe fleckenlose Haut ist das schönste was ein Frauenzimmer haben kann, sie dient sogar ihrer Leiche im Sarg zur Zierde, und wenn ich einst sterbe, so weiβ ich gewiβ, daβ alles über die Blancheur meines Teint verwundert sein wird . . . (6).

But Juliette finds her comment amusing and replies: "Ach, Madame! wenn ich erst todt bin, so soll mir das gleich viel sein, und wenn ich so schwarz wie ein Mohr aussehe! . . ." (6). After this encounter, Madam Blond asks Juliette about the whereabouts of Amalie, who has been gathering wild

flowers in the fields, winding them into wreaths, stashing lavender "zwischen die Wäsche." Upon her return, Amalie is scolded by Madam Blond who renders her activities frivolous. Madam Blond states that Amalie's wind-blown hair can be fixed but her complexion will be ruined if she continues her absurd behavior. But Amalie ignores the criticism and declares that nature and freedom are more important to her than an impressive complexion:

> Amalie: O so las mir doch die unschuldige Freude! Die Blumen waren von je her meine Lieblinge, und es ist so ein liebes natürliches Vergnügen, was der liebe Gott uns giebt! - Gewiß Bonnchen! wenn ich heirathe und Mutter werde, so will ich mich zwischen meine Kinder setzen und Blumen pflücken und Kränze mit ihnen winden.
>
> Juliette (Spöttisch): Aber der Teint, liebes Fräulein! der Teint wird bei dieser schönen Mutterbeschäftigung gewaltig leiden!
>
> Amalie: Wenn mein Mann mich liebt, wird es ihm einerlei sein, ob ich ein bißchen schwärzer bin oder nicht . . . (8).

After Amalie ignores the criticism, Juliette and Madam Blond inform her that the Kammerjunker, a high-society acquaintance of Madam Blond, is vying for her hand in marriage. Amalie has heard that he is a good dancer and wants her father to give a ball. Her father is reluctant to

but finally yields to his beloved daughter. At the same time, he tells her that the Kammerjunker has a rival for her hand, the Rittmeister, and Amalie is overjoyed with the prospect of evaluating the men's dancing abilities. Her father abhors the idea but allows her to carry on in spite of himself.

The two opposing suitors, however, have less than admirable intentions for marrying Amalie which the audience discovers via asides spoken by each of them. The conceited, shallow, and self-serving Kammerjunker conveys that he has many debts, which his marriage to Amalie will eliminate. He also plans to "retire" Amalie's father from his duties: "Eh bieu! Wenn die Tochter erst mein ist, so soll der Vater schon nach meiner Pfeife tanzen . . ." (42). The Rittmeister reveals, now that the war is over, that he merely wants to get married. The fact that Amalie is beautiful and has money and good breeding makes her a good candidate, although he is not particularly attracted to her.

After acquainting herself with both suitors, Amalie confesses that neither pleases her. The Kammerjunker may dance well but his incessant self-adoration and fixing his powdered hair, which incidentally has blown powder all over his back, and his mixing of German and French apparently do not impress her. His concern with how his appearance compares to his rival's is relieved by Madam Blond assuring him that the Rittmeister is much older and uglier than he. Amalie's father has little tolerance for the Kammerjunker

and refers to him as both a "Zuckerpuppe" and a "Zuckerstolle" and demands that he speak German. He asks the Kammerjunker how many pounds of musk he is wearing (just as the Rittmeister opens the window to escape the overpowering scent) and he replies: "Huile de Rose und ungefähr 20 Tropfen mille fleurs . . ." (36). Amalie, however, emphatically states that she prefers the scent of fresh flowers.

The other suitor, the Rittmeister, is not quite as obnoxious as his rival, however he is much older and more unrefined. He treats Amalie like a child and speaks to her father about her as if she were not present and she finds his absence of manners and patriarchal attitude displeasing. For example, when the Kammerjunker writes her a note, the Rittmeister demands to know the contents. He argues that in all fairness, since they are rivals, he has a right to see it. Amalie replies that even her own father did not demand to see the note and she has no obligation to show it to him. Her father agrees that what is addressed to his daughter is her business and that neither he nor the Rittmeister has the right to demand it. At this point, the Rittmeister comments to Amalie's father that: "Das Mädchen scheint sehr naseweis . . ." (34). But "naseweis" in this instance is not a character flaw for the independent Amalie. Instead, as a result of her "Weisheit" and quick wit, she devises a competition to determine the man whom she will marry. Her father, an "enlightened" man, has given his daughter the

freedom to marry whomever she chooses, even if he finds her choice distasteful. The terms of Amalie's competition are as follows:

> Ich liebe die Blumen. Wer von Ihnen beiden mir morgen früh das meinen Lieblingsideen angessenste Bouquet bringt, erhält meine Hand; - gefällt mir keines, so bitte ich um Ihre beiderfertige Freundschaft!...Die Natur hat viele schöne Blume; es wird Ihnen also nicht schwer werden, mich damit zu beschenken . . . (38).

The two suitors scramble to assemble their bouquets, but, again, their means of attaining the bouquets reveal their true nature, which Amalie easily detects. The Kammerjunker's bouquet is actually meant for another countess who will be attending the ball, but by deceiving a servant girl, the Kammerjunker's servant steals it away from her so the Kammerjunker can to give it to Amalie. The Kammerjunker finds his servant's actions commendable and states: "Ein Folkbouquet nach der Natur! Dieser Gedanke ist einzig! . . ." (44). Similarly, the Rittmeister's methods are unacceptable. He states: "(Bei Seite): Jetzt freut mich mein Treibhaus zum erstenmal . . ." (39). He orders all the roses, carnations, hyacinths, and myrtle in his greenhouse to be used for the bouquet and dictates that they be bound with a huge red sash and bow. When asked how much material to buy, the Rittmeister replies no less than twelve to sixteen yards.

The next scene builds suspense and provides comic relief, as it reveals Madam Blond's true nature as well. Again, she vainly sits before a mirror admiring her complexion and boasts that, unfortunately, Amalie is not blessed with the coquettishness that she possesses. But she also notices that she looks a bit pale and decides to use some rouge on her cheeks. Just then, the servant Jeremis unexpectedly brings her breakfast and comments on how nicely she is painting herself, to which she indignantly replies that she was brushing her teeth. When Jeremis asks if her teeth are on her cheek, she slaps him and the commotion attracts the attention of Amalie and her father. When asked for an explanation, Madam Blond replies that Jeremis was trying to kiss her and she was forced to defend herself. Madam Blond escapes the interrogation and retires to her room and the Obrist demands an explanation from Jeremis. After learning the truth from the servant and examining Madam Blond's unnaturally reddened cheek, the Obrist orders her out of his house. But Amalie feels sorry for the old woman and implores her father not to be angry with Madam Blond because aside from her vanity, she is truly a good person.

The interlude, however, is interrupted when Amalie notices that the Rittmeister's bouquet has arrived and the final, suspenseful scene begins. The Rittmeister's huge bouquet takes her by surprise and she asks:

Amalie: ...Wozu haben Sie einen solchen Aufwand von Band gemacht?

Juliette: Um Sie zu binden, gnädiges Fräulein.

Amalie: Ungebundene Blumen sind die schönsten . . . (54).

Then, the Kammerjunker appears and presents his colorful, yet unnatural, bouquet. Amalie thanks him but announces that neither bouquet suits her and gives the following reasons:

> Das Ihrige Herr Rittmeister hat einen so groβen Umfang, daβ es scheint, mit Gewalt die Bewunderung durch Ueberhäufung erregen zu wollen; was man einzelnen Blumen nicht versagen könnte, die wohlgewählt zum Herzen sprächen, verliert beim Blick auf die Menge! . . . und Ihr Bouquet, Herr Kammerjunker, so einzig es in seiner Art, und so schön die Arbeit ist -stellt das Bild der Ueppigkeit und der Unnatur so lebhaft dar, - das nur ein vom Glanze schimmernder Städte geblendetes Auge, nicht aber ein einfaches, auf dem Lande, mitten in der Schönheiten der Natur, gebildetes Herz, Geschmack daran finden kann! . . . (56-57).

Amalie offers the suitors her friendship and tells her father that she knows another man will come and bring flowers, and her will be the one whom she marries. This prediction foreshadows the coming event, as Amalie remembers a dream she had, but never had a chance to reveal to Madam

Blond or Juliette. Another man does in fact appear, Amalie's distant cousin Carl, who has been away fighting in the war. He approaches Amalie and reminds her of their youthful folly:

> Carl: Erinnern Sie sich noch Cousinchen! wie wir vor sechs Jahren, wenn wir auf die Wiese spielten, Blumen pflückten! - Ich ritt daran vorbei - und eingedenk jener seligen Kinderzeit pflückte ich ie einfachen Blümchen für Sie.
>
> Amalie: Meine Lieblingsblumen! Ich habe dich nicht vergessen! - Je länger je lieber - werden wir uns haben! - und die Schlüsselblumen gebe ich Ihnen halb zurück und mit denselben den Schlüssel zu meinem Herzen, wenn Sie ihn anders haben wollen! . . . Väterchen, das ist das rechte Bouquet! . . . (59-60).

The play closes with Amalie's father bestowing his blessing on the forthcoming union:

> Komm her, Herzenskind! und Du auch Hauptmann Carl! So, nun lasse mich Gott in Freude erleben, bis ins achzigste Jahr so zwischen Euch zu sitzen; denn drückst Du, Carl, dem alten Vater die Augen zu, Du Amalie, bestreust seine Leiche mit Blumen, und Gott sagt: Punctum . . . (62).

DIE HEIRATHSLUSTIGEN, NACHSPIEL is the second part of Elise Bürger's SÄMTLICHE WERKE. The main character is a wealthy Englishman, Lord Henry Sieber (Sieb=riddle), who has inherited 80,000 gulden. He places an ad in the newspaper soliciting "older" people to apply who want to marry and begin their lives anew in the West Indies. However, there is one condition, they must give up their right to choose their spouse and let fate decide whom they marry. Lord Sieber mentions that it may be nobler to build an orphanage or a hospital instead of whimsically wasting his money on an adventure, but he explains that the French blood on his mother's side will not allow him to do what his stuffy, sour English compatriots would do.

As the play opens, Lord Sieber's servant Wilhelm prepares a room in the goldnen Schwann, an inn in Amsterdam, with a table, two vases, small pieces of paper, a pen, fourteen chairs, and fourteen rings, as Sieber dresses himself in a costume. Sieber interviews each candidate individually, obtains a brief life's history, and reiterates that they must swear an oath giving up their right to choose a spouse. The majority of the Heirathslustigen, he finds, are not interested in marriage at all, but instead, for various reasons, have their sights on the money.

The interviews reveal that the candidates come from different social groups and hold vastly different occupations. The first man is Peter Veit, a 42 year-old land leaser whose bride died many years earlier and has

since become a drunk. The second man, Baron von Zierlich, is an eccentric 56 year-old bachelor whose possessions were so rare and beautiful, he did not want a wife, servant, or cook meddling among his things. His eccentricity led him to lower goods and food in and out of a window in order that no grain of sand manifest itself in his exquisite carpets or mar his polished marble floors, but he became lonely and decided to join the group. The next candidate, Magister Beiβan, Cadidatus Philosophiae, is a disillusioned native German who feels that the citizens of his fatherland are resisting change:

> Das sind die Menschen von viel zu grobem Stoff; sie hassen die Aufklärung, und sind so altmodisch, daβ sie keineswegs die Ehre haben, mir zu gefallen; . . . dort (in West Indien) werde ich Gelegenheit haben, die Theorie meiner Philosophie durch Praxis zu erhöhen . . . (84).

The fourth man, Monsier Poltron, is an unemployed fencing master who wants to go to the New World to practice his art "unter einem anderen Himmelsreiche" (88). The next candidate is characterized as a Schwärmer, Herr Mondschein. He describes himself as a "love child" and was raised by a painter and the painter's landlady. He was once in love but his feelings were not returned. She threw away his letters and poetry and rewarded his affections by emptying a glass of water on his head. As a final gesture, she also sent him a rusty, old pistol to rid herself of him, perhaps playing

on the final few scenes in Goethe's Werther. But alas, the poor man was never able to forget her, but was also unable to support himself. The sixth candidate, the barber Niklaus Rebensaft, describes himself as not only a barber, but a barber like the famous Barber of Seville, in that he not only cuts hair, lets blood, and shaves faces, he also is a matchmaker, albeit an unpaid, starving matchmaker. The final candidate is the French tailor François san Chagrin who describes himself as the best tailor in Europe. His dilemma, however, is that after the revolution, he was not able to earn a living. He came to Holland to start a new life but the fashions are so antiquated that, again, he cannot earn enough to support himself:

> . . . darum will ik gehn nak die Indes, bring dort neue façon und vergeβ das undankbare Europe, wo is niks mehr zu mack, seit die Leut nur sprek von Egalité uns tragen Dimanche und ander Tag einerlei Kleit! . . . (97).

Each character Bürger presents speaks in a style of language suited to his or her social position and background. The first man, the drunk, speaks simply, while the philosopher speaks academically and snobbishly, and Herr Mondschein speaks poetically and hyperbolically. Bürger's awareness of the society in which she lived makes this play enjoyable and amusing, but the way in which she criticizes social norms and attitudes is noticeable.

The second half of the group is made up of seven women, the first being Susanna Geldlieb, a 40 year-old chambermaid, whom the lord addresses quite informally: "wie alt bist Du denn, mein Schätzchen?" . . . (100). Her unhappy situation is caused by what today would be described as ageism. Ten years earlier she had been called "schöne Suβchen" but as she aged she was called "alte Drache" or "alte Deugna." She could not stay on as a "Kammerjunfer" because she was too old but too pure to be called a "Kammerfrau": "weil ich noch ein ehrliches Mädchen bin . . ." (100). She was so upset that she decided to answer the ad, get married, and leave the country. The second woman, Frau von Lieblich, is a 45 year-old pious woman who was married to a good-for-nothing. After his death, she became devout in her faith and regarded the newspaper ad as a chance to convert Indians in the New World. Susanna, the chambermaid, however, recognizes her as her former employer and denounces her as a phony, lying gossip who put a Purgiersmittel in the Justizräthin's coffee at a ball to keep her from winning the title of best dancer. Frau von Liebling defends herself by stating that she has reformed and was told by God in a dream to answer the ad. Lord Sieber simply points out that: "Im Himmelreich sind wir so alle gleich . . ." (106). The third woman is Frau Grimmig, the widowed proprietor of the "goldnen Schwann," whose step-son's next birthday will make him old enough to assume the family business. Since she will be put out of a job, she decides to join the others in

hopes of establishing her own business in the West Indies. The next woman, Madam Ricobert, is a governess who has been forced out of a job because of the changing social structure:

> Damen vom Stande werden nun so gemein, daβ sie ihre Kinder selbst erziehen, wie die Bürgerfrauen, uns es ist nicht möglich, mehr zu finden eine gute Condition . . . alle vornehme Kinder läβt man jetzt laufen wie die Gemeinen; abgeschnittenes Haar, kurze Röcke, bloβen Hals, nackte Arme! . . . Ach! da ist mir alle Lust vergangen, ferner Gouvernante zu sein! - Lieber will ich von einem Mann geouvernirien lassen! . . . (110).

She regards social change more confining than marriage and decides to give up her self-sufficient lifestyle to be governed by a man. The fifth woman is Mademoiselle Springinsfeld, a once-accomplished ballerina whose life was ruined by love. She married a tight-rope dancer and was forced to join his father's troupe in order to make a living. After eighteen years and much misfortune, her husband died and the troupe disbanded. She found herself unemployed and because of the undignified way she had made a living, was unable to perform on any stage again. Thus, she decides to find refuge in a new country. The sixth woman, Signora Zechini, the once-famous Italian opera singer, confesses that although her career was quite successful, she had trouble managing her money: "ik bin nit gewohnt geweβ,

zu managir die Geld, ist mir nix geblieb übrig . . ." (116). She met with misfortune on the German stage and as a result she states: ". . . ik bin geweβt prostituir . . ." (116). Rather than perform in Germany again, she decides to marry, go to the West Indies, and enjoy peaceful anonymity. The final woman in the group is Mademoiselle Joli, who deals in wigs, jewelry, and other trinkets. She regards men as one of the most vile creatures on earth because out of the 365 love affairs she has had since she turned fifteen, not one blossomed into marriage. She inherited her father's business and was successful for thirty years until no one would buy her outdated styles any longer. She decides to take her wares to the West Indies in hopes of selling them there. Her decision to leave the country was finalized when the French tailor with whom she was involved disappeared, when she discovers that the Frenchman is none other than Monsieur François! The two have a joyful reunion but sorrowfully realize that he has already sworn an oath to let fate decide his marriage partner; she does the same in hopes that Madam Fortuna look kindly upon them, allowing them to be together.

Just as all the candidates have been interviewed and have sworn their oaths, a 20 year-old woman, Jungfer Fröhlich, appears, wanting to join the group. Lord Sieber is immediately taken with her and listens to her story. Her widowed father, an officer in the army, died two years earlier from wounds inflicted during the revolution. She

and her servant woman worked to sustain themselves but the servant died as well. After seeing the ad in the newspaper, she decided to ask the man organizing the excursion to allow her to accompany the group. After hearing her story, the lord examines her personal papers and discovers that her mother was his French grandmother's sister. He then proposes marriage and she happily accepts, but admits:

> Werden Sie mir wohl verzeihen, wenn ich Ihnen als Vetter offen erwiedere, daß, wenn ich mir jemals das Bild eines künftigen Gatten dachte, so war es dem Ihrigen sehr unähnlich . . . (126).

Lord Sieber forgets that he is wearing a costume and removes it so his bride can see him.

What begins as an adventurous game of chance leads to the lord's participation. The play closes with the "Heirathslustigen" dancing and singing around the theater:

> Sind wir in Amerika,
> Wollen frei wir leben,
> mit den lieben Säcken da
> uns den Wohlstand geben;
> jeder nimt sein Weib in Arm,
> Geld und Liebchen winken;
> frei von Sorgen, frei von Harm
> Wollen wir dort trinken! . . . (129).

DIE ÜBERRASCHUNG, FAMILIENGEMÄLDE IN EINEM ACT (1801) is a play written in honor of Queen Charlotte of Hannover, where

it takes place. The old, widowed nurse of the noble family, Frau Marthe, has four daughters Lieschen, Hannchen, Gretchen, and Trinchen. Other than their house and potato field, they are all but destitute. The play opens with the four girls dressed in Sunday clothes working at their spinning wheels. They are dressed up in honor of queen Charlotte's birthday, a festival for the mother of their land. After the girls are done spinning they go their separate ways, just as a stranger appears at the door to talk to Frau Marthe. He assures her that they know each other but she cannot remember him. He makes a peculiar proposition that if her four daughters marry on this day, he will give each couple 1,000 thaler. Marthe naively regards the situation inconceivable because her daughters have no suitors, but the stranger quickly proves her wrong. Marthe and the stranger witness a scene between Lieschen and her beau Töffel, in which the couple discusses how to approach Marthe about their marriage intentions:

> Töffel: Sieh nur an, Lieschen, deine Mutter kann ja gar nichts an mir aussetzen, als daß ich nicht reich bin. Denn ein ehrlicher Schäferknecht bin ich all mein Lebstage gewesen, und arbeiten kann ich noch nebenbei, also -
>
> Lieschen: Ach was also! - ich habe auch zwei Hände und bin jung und stark . . . (9).

After they leave, Hannchen and her beau Gürge appear and discuss when they should ask permission to marry. The situation is too unbelievable for Marthe and she interrupts the surprised couple. She and the stranger explain the proposition to them and Marthe agrees that perhaps it is appropriate for the two older couples to marry but she argues that her two younger daughters do not even have prospects. But Trinchen reveals that she is in love with the boy next door and Gretchen, who is a year older, also has wedding plans. After learning of her daughters' suitors, Marthe agrees to accept the stranger's generosity, especially since it is the queen's birthday and the the wedding anniversary of her Milchtochter, Sophie von Lindheim, and she has no money for the dowries. In the meantime, Töffel and Lieschen return from a walk and hear of the stranger's generous offer to which Töffel responds: "Sind all gut die, aber ohne die tausend Thaler wärest Du mir eben so lieb gewesen; Lieschen Du bist meine tausend Thaler . . ." (21). The stranger tells them when and where to be for the ceremony, as he will arrange the details.

Sophie von Lindheim, Marthe's Milchtochter, on the other hand, is mourning the loss of her husband Carl, who left for Scotland on business more than six months earlier. The distressing thought of spending their seventh wedding anniversary alone is unbearable for Sophie but her mother assures her that such a good, true wife and mother cannot go unrewarded by God. But when Sophie and her family arrive at

the festival and Sophie sees the four couples preparing to marry, she prays to God that if Carl is dead that he take her too. Carl calls out to Sophie and as she hears his voice, the stranger's identity is revealed, "die Überraschung." They embrace as Sophie chides him for his communicative negligence. Carl apologizes and explains that his delay was caused by a court battle over an unexpected inheiritance and a two-month-long illness. He shares his good fortune with Marthe's daughters in honor of the woman who nourished and raised his beloved wife.

DIE ANTIKE STATUE AUS FLORENZ, SCHERZSPIEL IN EINEM AKT (1814) is written in Alexandrine verse and was first performed in Nürnberg with Elise Bürger playing the leading role. According to Arthur Richel, a biographer of Bürger, the play was often performed in Nürnberg and Köln.

This one-act play consists of four characters, Ludwig, his wife Laura, Laura's sister Rosaura, and Ludwig's servant Ferdinand. It begins as Laura discusses her marital problems with her sister. She conveys that her husband has grown cold toward her and that the happiness they experienced in the first years of marriage has vanished. Laura reveals that she is suspicious of the locked, yellow room on the second floor of their house and imagines that her husband is hiding another woman there. But her sister assures her that nothing of that nature is taking place: "Kein Mädchen ist bei ihm, nur weise Bilder, Büsten /

Von Gips sind es, die sich in diesem Zimmer brüsten / Antiken, denen er so Zeit als Liebe weiht . . ." (3).

At first, Laura thinks her sister is joking but Rosaura insists she is telling the truth. Just then, they hear Ludwig and his servant Ferdinand coming and they hide in a closet to eavesdrop.

Ludwig complains to Ferdinand that he has waited all day in vain for his statue to be delivered. He continues complaining by comparing his wife to his perfect works of art, expressing how she lacks artistic qualities and talent, criticizing her appearance:

> Doch ist sie gar nicht schön, sie hat gemeine Formen,
> Kein hohes Ebenmaβ, sie paβte zu Herrn Ormen.
> Hätt der sie nur gefreyt, das wär wohl noch ein Paar!
> Zwar liebte damals ich ach, schon sind es sechs Jahr -
> An ihr der Tugend Reiz, doch der ist längst vergangen,
> Jetzt ist mein Aug' gewohnt an edleres Verlangen . . . (8).

With this, he pulls a sketch of his ideal "masterpiece" from his pocket, which is on its way from Florence. After hearing her husband's criticism, Laura is crushed and rashly

decides to leave: "Kann er hingeben warme Lieb an kalte Puppen/So zieh zum Onkel ich, er bleibe bei der Gruppen . . ." (11). But Rosaura persuades her to stay, besides, she says: "Auch sehe ich zur Scheidung weder Schuld noch Klage / Man lachte Dich nur aus, sprächst Du von Deiner Plage . . ." (12). She reminds Laura that his odd behavior began shortly after seeing a mimische Darstellung, a short performance in which an actor or actress takes on the qualities of a painting, sculpture, or character in history or literature. It seems that Ludwig now has a fixation for classical art and Laura agrees: "Ich glaube, Du hast Recht/Denn seit dem Unglückstag, da findt er alles schlecht/Was nicht antik, und klassisch will er alles haben . . . (13). But luckily, Laura and Rosaura intercept a letter which Ferdinand is about to deliver to Ludwig telling him that his statue was broken into bits on the way from Florence. Rosaura replies: "Bravo! So gehts den gipsnen schönen Damen . . ." (16). Laura agrees and decides to take agressive action:

> Ich will den schwachen, lieben Mann kuriren,
> Ich bin ihm gar zu gut, ich kann ihn nicht
> verlieren.
> Es geht gewiβ. Aufs neue gewinne ich sein Herz
> Und zwar durch einen zarten, leichten Frauen
> Scherz.
> Mein Spiegel sagt mir doch, ich sey nicht schlecht
> gebaut

Nun denn, o Laura, einmal nur dir selbst
vertraut! . . . (17-18).

The sisters' plot continues when they go to the locked, yellow room, Laura dresses herself exactly as the statue in the sketch is dressed. She climbs onto a pedestal in wait of her husband. Ludwig enters the room and is overjoyed when he thinks his perfect masterpiece has arrived. One by one he admires the statue's (Laura's) physical features, the very same features he had previously criticized when he described his wife.

As the statue (Laura) gracefully begins to move, Ludwig experiences chills and thinks he is seeing ghosts or going insane. He kneels in homage before his ideal and implores an answer from her:

Laura: So sieh, was längst Die schon Freund Amor
zugesandt, Dein liebend Weib!

Ludwig: O Himmel!

Laura: Nicht aus fernen Land . . . kömmt Dir Dein
wahres Glück, es war schon längst Dir nah,
Nur daß es nicht Dein fernhin schwärmend Auge
sah.
Du suchtest weit, was täglich längst schon
Dich umgeben
Und nach geträumter Reiz gieng nur Dein
geistig streben . . . (26).

As if waking from a trance, Ludwig comes to his senses and pledges his love to Laura and promises to give up his

obsession. Rosaura, who has been hiding in the closet, comes out, climbs onto the pedestal, and holds a wreath of myrtle and roses over the couple and declares: "Ich kränze sie, die ist antik, modern und ewig schön . . ." (28).

APPENDIX B

OTHER WORKS BY ELISE BÜRGER

Bürger, Elise. Adelheit, Gräfin von Teck. Ritterschauspiel in fünf Aufzügen. Jena: Voigt, 1812.

---. Schein und Wahrheit. Ein dialogisierte Geschichte. Hannover: n. p., 1799.

---. Irrgänge des weiblichen Herzens. Dirza. Aglaja. Hamburg und Altona: n. p., 1799.

---. Sämmtliche theatralische Werke. Das Bouquet, Schauspiel; Die Heirathslustigen, Nachspiel. Lemgo: Meier, 1801.

---. Die Überraschung. Familiengemälde in einem Acte. Hannover: Pockwitz, 1801.

---. Ueber meinen Aufenthalt in Hannover gegen den ungennanten Verfasser der Schicksale einer theatralischen Abentheurerin. Altona: n. p., 1801.

---. Mein Taschenbuch. Den Freundlichen meines Geschlechts geweiht. Bd. 1, 2. Dresden und Pirna: n. p., 1804, 1807.

---. Die schöne Büssende oder Veronika aus den Karpathen. Bremen: Müller, 1807.

---. Gedichte. Als erster Band ihrer Gedichte, Reiseblätter, Kunst- und Lebensansichten. Hamburg: Müller, 1812.

---. Lieder am Rhein. 1813.

---. Lilienblätter von Theodora. Die schwäbische Bäuerin in Sachsen. Offenbach: n. p., 1823.

---. Lilienblätter und Zypressenzweige von Theodora. Frankfurt am Main: n. p., 1826.

---. Klara von Montalban. Drama in fünf Akten. Handschriften befinden sich in der Mannheimer Theaterbibliothek und in der Wiener Staatsbibliothek.

---. Die Freunde zu Syrakus. Schauspiel in Jamben und fünf Akten. In: Cottaschen Morgenblatt (172-173): 1816.

---. Die antike Statue aus Florenz. Scherzspiel in einem Akt. Frankfurt am Main: n. p., 1815.

---. Die Würfelbraut. Lustspiel in fünf Akten. Aufgeführt dreimal in Kassel, 1829.

APPENDIX C

DAS GEDICHT "AN DEN DICHTER BÜRGER"

O Bürger, Bürger, edler Mann,
Der Lieder singt, wie keiner kann,
Von Rhein an bis zum Belt,
Vergebens berg' ich das Gefühl,
Das mir bei deinem Harfenspiel
Den Busen schwellt!

Mein Auge sah von dir sonst nichts,
Als nur die Abschrift des Gesichts,
Und dennoch - lieb' ich dich!
Denn deine Seele, fromm und gut,
Und deiner Lieder Kraft und Muth
Entzükten mich.

So füllt' im ganzen Musenhain
Von allen Sängern, groß und klein,
Noch keiner mir die Brust.
Sie wogt' empor wie Fluth der See;
Es kämpften stürmend Lust und Weh,
Und Weh und Lust.

An Wonnen, wie an Thränen reich,
Rief ich, wie oft: O herzen gleich
Und küssen möchte ich dich! -
So wechselte, wie dein Gesang,
In mir der Hochgefühle Drang,
Dem alles wich.

O Bürger, Bürger, süßer Mann,
Der Ohr und Herz bezaubern kann
Mit Schmeichel=Wort und Sinn,
Mein Loblied ehrt dich freilich nicht:
Doch höre, was mein Herz dir spricht,
Und wer ich bin!

In Schwaben blüht am Neckarstrand
Ein schönes segenreiches Land,
Das mich an's Licht gebar;
Ein Land, worin seit grauer Zeit
Die alte Deutsche Redlichkeit
Zu Hause war.

Da wuchs ich wohlbehalten auf,
Und meines reinen Lebens Lauf
Maß zwanzig Mahl das Jahr.
Zum Grabe sank mein Vater früh -
Kaum ließ mir noch der Himmel die,
Die mich gebar.

Schon wankend an des Grabes Rand,
Ergriff sie des Erbarmers Hand,
Und gab sie mir zurük.
Sie bildete mit weiser Müh',
Was Gutes mir Natur verlieh,
Zu meinem Glück.

Bei heiterm Geist, bei frohem Muth
Ward mir ein Herz, das fromm und gut
Vor Gott zu seyn begehrt.
Nur edler Liebe huldigt's frei,
Und was es liebt, das liebt es treu
Und hält es werth.

Mein Lieb, - er zeigt vielleicht dem Blik
Kein Stümper= und kein Meisterstük
Der bildenden Natur.
Ich bin nicht arm, und bin nicht reich;
Mein Stand hält, meinen Gütern gleich,
Die Mittelspur.

Die bin ich, die! Und - liebe dich!
Im schönen Stuttgardt findst du mich,
Du trauter Witwersmann!
Umschlänge wohl nach langem Harm
Ein liebevolles Weib dein Arm,
So komm heran!

Dann träten tausend Freier her,
Und böten Säkke Goldes schwer,
Und du begehrtest mein:
Dir weigert' ich nicht Herz noch Hand;
Selbst um mein liebes Vaterland
Tauscht' ich dich ein.

Steht Schwaben=Lieb' und Treu' dir an,
So komm, Geliebter, komm heran,
Und wirb - o wirb um mich! -
Nimm oder nimm mich nicht, so ist
Und bleibt mein Lied zu jeder Frist:
Dich lieb' ich, dich!

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY LITERATURE

Bürger, Elise. Adelheit, Gräfin von Teck. Ritterschauspiel in fünf Aufzügen. Jena: Voigt, 1812.

---. Die antike Statue aus Florenz. Scherzspiel in einem Akt. Frankfurt am Main: Schaefer, 1929.

---. Sämmtliche theatralische Werke. Das Bouquet, Schauspiel; Die Heirathslustigen, Nachspiel. Lemgo: Meier, 1801.

---. Gedichte von Elise Bürger als erster Band ihrer Gedichte, Reiseblätter, Kunst- und Lebensansichten. Hamburg: Müller, 1812.

---. Ueber meinen Aufenthalt in Hannover gegen den ungenannten Verfasser der Schicksale einer theatralischen Abentheurerin. Altona: n. p., 1801.

---. Die Überraschung. Familiengemälde in einem Acte. Hannover: Pockwitz, 1801.

SECONDARY LITERATURE

SOCIO-HISTORICAL SOURCES

Arnold, Heinz Ludwig and Volker Sinemus, Grundzüge der Literatur- und Sprachwissenschaft München: Taschenbuch, 1973.

Becker-Cantarino, Barbara. Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1987.

Beutin, Wolfgang and Klaus Ehlert, u.a. Deutsche Literaturgeschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1989.

Brinker-Gabler, Gisela. Deutsche Literatur von Frauen: vom Mittelalter bis zum Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts. München: Beck, 1988.

Bruns, Berhnhard. Ehescheidung und Wiederheirat im Fall von Ehebruch. München: Schoningh, 1976.

Chester, Robert, Ed. Divorce in Europe. Belgium: Netherlands Interuniversity Demographic Institute, 1977.

Erler, Adalbert and Ekkehard Kaufmann, Eds. Handwörterbuch zur deutschen Rechtsgeschichte. Berlin: Schmidt, 1967.

Fout, John C., Ed. German Women in the Nineteenth Century. A Social History. New York: Holmes, 1984.

Frevert, Ute. Women in German History. From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation. Oxford: St. Martin's, 1989.

Gallas, Helga and Magdelene Heuser, Eds. Untersuchungen zum Roman von Frauen um 1800. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1990.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. Sämtliche Werke nach Epochen seines Schaffens, Münchner Ausgabe. Eckermann, Ed. München: Hanser, 1985.

Goodman, Katherine. Dis/closures. Women's Autobiography in Germany between 1790 and 1914. New York: Lang, 1986.

Greiner, Martin. Die Entstehung der modernen Unterhaltungsliteratur. Studien zum Trivialroman des 18. Jahrhunderts. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1964.

Grimminger, Rolf, Ed. Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur vom 16. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart. 3. Bd. München: Hanser, 1980.

Hauser, Arnold. Sozialgeschichte der Kunst und Literatur. Bd. 2. München: Beck, 1953.

Hoche, Johann Gottfried. Vertraute Briefe. Hannover, 1794.

Hoff, Dagmar von. Dramen des Weiblichen. Deutsche Dramatikerinnen um 1800. Opladen: Westdeutscher, 1989.

Joeres Ruth-Ellen, B. and Mary Jo Maynes, Eds. German Women in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. A Social and Literary History. Bloomington: Indiana U P, 1986.

Jurgensen, Manfred, Ed. Frauenliteratur. Autorinnen, Perspektiven, Konzepte. Bern: Lang, 1983.

Krauss, Werner and Walter Dietze, Eds. Neue Beiträge zur Literatur der Aufklärung. Berlin: Rütten, 1964.

Lichterberger, J.P. Divorce: A Social Interpretation. New York: Whittlesey, 1931.

Meise, Helga. Die Unschuld und die Schrift. Deutsche Frauenromane im 18. Jahrhundert. Berlin: Guttandin, 1983.

Novak, Sigrid Scholtz. "The Invisible Woman: The Case of the Female Playwright in German Literature." Journal of Social Issues 28 (1972): 47-57.

Paulsen, Wolfgang, Ed. Die Frau als Heldin und Autorin. Bern: Francke, 1979.

Phillips, Roderick. Putting Asunder: A History of Divorce in Western Society. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1988.

Ritchie, Gisela F. Der Dichter und die Frau. Literarische Frauengestalten durch drei Jahrhunderte. Bonn: Bouvier, 1989.

Schiller, Friedrich von. Sämtlich Werke. Gerhard Fricke, Ed. München: Beck, 1959.

Weigel, Sigrid. Die Stimme der Medusa. Schreibweisen in der Gegenwartsliteratur von Frauen. Dülmen-Hiddingsel: Tende, 1987.

Westermarck, Edward. The History of Human Marriage. vols. 2, 3. London: Macmillan, 1921.

Wilson, Katharina M. Women Writers of the Renaissance and Reformation. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1987.

Woolsey, Theodore D. Essay on Divorce and Divorce Legislation. New York: Scribner, 1869.

Wurst, Karin A., Ed. Frauen und Drama im achtzehnten Jahrhundert. Köln: Böhlau, 1991.

FEMINIST/LITERARY THEORY

Bab, Julius. Die Frau als Schauspielerin. Berlin: Oesterheld, 1915.

Becker-Cantarino, Barbara. Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1987.

Blackwell, Jeanine and Susanne Zantop, Eds. Bitter Healing: German Women Writers from 1700 to 1830. Lincoln: U of Nebraska, 1990.

---. "Anonym, verschollen, trivial: Methodological Hindrances in Researching German Women's Literature." Women in German Yearbook 1 (1985): 39-59.

Butler, Judith. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge, 1990.

De Beauvoir, Simone. The Second Sex. New York: Knopf, 1971.

Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1983.

Frederiksen, Elke, Ed. Women Writers of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. New York: Greenwood, 1989.

Gerhard, C. "Bürgers dritte Gattin." Didaskalia 306 (1897): 1223.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar, Eds. The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination. New Haven: Yale U P, 1979.

Gilligan, Carol. In a Different Voice. Psychological Theory and Women's Development. Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1982.

Goldschmidt, Rudolf K. Die Schauspielerin. Ihr Weg, ihre Gestalt und ihre Wirkung. Stuttgart: Hädecke, 1922.

Goodman, Katherine R. and Edith Waldstein, Eds. In the Shadow of Olympus: German Women Writers Around 1800. Albany: SUNY, 1992.

Greene, Gayle and Coppelia Kahn, Eds. Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism. London: Routledge, 1985.

Mentzel, Elizabeth. Geschichte der Schauspielkunst in Frankfurt am Main von ihren Anfängen bis zur Eröffnung des städtischen Komödienhauses. Ein Bitrag zur deutschen Kultur- und Thatergeschichte. Frankfurt am Main: Völcker, 1882.

---. Das alte Frankfurter Schauspielhaus und seine Vorgeschichte. Mit der Abbildung des alten Schauspielhauses und 20 Portraits. Frankfurt am Main: Rütten, 1902.

Millett, Kate. Sexual Politics. New York: Ballantine, 1969.

Moers, Ellen. Literary Women. New York: Oxford U P, 1963.

Moi, Toril. Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory. London: Methuen, 1985.

Schowalter, Elaine, Ed. The New Feminist Criticism. New York: Pantheon, 1985.

---. A Literature of Their Own. Princeton: Princeton U P, 1977.

Schulte-Sasse, Jochen. Die Kritik an der Trivialliteraturseit der Aufklärung. Studien zur Geschichte des modernen Kitschbegriffs. München: Kink, 1971.

Stümcke, Heinrich. Die Frau als Schauspielerin. Leipzig: Rothbarth, 1905.

Woolfe, Virginia. A Room of One's Own. San Diego: Harcourt, 1929.

BIOGRAPHICAL SOURCES

Althof, Ludwig Christoph. "Einige Nachrichten von dem vornehmsten Lebensumständen G. A. Bürgers nebst einem Beitrag zur Charakteristik desselben." In: Gottfried August Bürgers Sämtliche Werke. Berlin: Weichert, 1905.

Brümmer, Franz. Deutsches Dichter-Lexikon. Biographische und bibliographische Mittheilungen über deutsche Dichter aller Zeiten. Bd. 1. Stuttgart: Krüll, 1876.

Bürger, Gottfried August. Sämtliche Werke. Berlin: Willdorff, 1905.

Döring, Heinrich. G. A. Bürgers Leben. Berlin: n. p., 1826.

Duboc, Julius. "Bürgers Charakter in seinem Liebesleben." Neue Monatshefte für Dichtkunst und Kritik 3 (1876): 145-60.

Ebeling, Friedrich Wilhelm. G. A. Bürger und Elise Hahn. Eine Ehe- Kunst- und Literaturleben. Leipzig: n. p., 1871.

Ebstein, Erich. "Neues über G. A. Bürgers Schwabenmädchen Elise Hahn. Acht Briefe an den Grafen Soden." Deutsche Thalia 1 (1902): 42-64.

---. "Über die Konfiskation von Bürgers Ehestands-geschichte." Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde 22 (1930).

Eisenberg, Ludwig. Großes Biographisches Lexikon der deutschen Bühne im XIX. Jahrhundert. Leipzig: n. p., 1903.

Ehrmann, Theophil, Ed. Briefe von Gottfried August Bürger an Marianne Ehrmann. Ein merkwürdiger Beitrag zur Geschichte der letzten Lebensjahre des Dichters. Weimar: Industrie-Comptoir, 1802.

Friedrichs, Elisabeth. Die deutschsprachigen Schriftstellerinnen des 18. und 19. Jahrhunderts. Ein Lexikon. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1981.

Geiger, Ludwig. "Eine Ausgestoßene. Elise Bürger." DieInsel 3 (1902): 156-65.

Gerhard, C. "Bürger's dritte Gattin. Skizze zur Erinnerungen an seinen 150 Geburtstag am 31. Dez." Didaskalien 306 (1901-02): 1897.

Goedecke, Karl. Grundrisz zur Geschichte der deutschen Quellen. Bd. 5, 7. Dresden: Ehlerman, 1884.

Gottfried August Bürgers Ehestandsgeschichte. Berlin: Schulz, 1812.

Groß, Heinrich. Deutschlands Dichterinen und Schrifstellerinen: Eine literar-historische Skizze. Wien: Gerold, 1882.

---. Deutsche Dichterinen und Schriftstellerinen in Wort und Bild. Berlin: Thiel, 1885.

Herloßsohn, C., Ed. Damen Conversations-Lexicon. 2. Bd. Adorf: Verlags-Bureau, 1846.

Kinder, Hermann. Bürgers Liebe: Dokumente zu Elise Hahnsund G. A . Bürgers unglücklichem Versuch, eine Ehe zuführen. Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 1981.

Kosch, Wilhelm. Deutsches Literatur-Lexikon. Biographisch-Bibliographisches Handbuch. 2. Bd. München: Francke, 1914.

Krekler, Ingeborg. Katalog der handschriftlichen Theaterbücher des ehemaligen Würtemburgischen Hoftheaters. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1979.

Krüger, Hermann Anders. Deutsches Literatur=Lexikon. München: Beck, 1914.

Laddey, E. "Aus den letzten Tagen einer Vielgenannten, Elise Bürger." Gartenlaube 1872: 126-128.

Mentzel, Elizabeth. "Neues über Elise Bürger." Bühne und Welt: Monatsschrift für das deutsche Kunst- und Geistesleben 1 (1912-13): 371-378.

Pfister, Kurt. "Drei Frauen um Gottfried August Bürger." Frauenschicksale aus 8 Jahrhunderten von Kurt Pfister. München: Nymphenburger Verlagshandlung (1949): 230-36.

Rassmann, Friedrich. Pantheon deutscher jetzt lebender Dichter und Schriftsteller. Helmstadt: n. p., 1823.

Richel, Arthur. "Die letzten Tage des Schwabenmädchens." Alt-Frankfurt 2 (1929): 13-14.

Rotermund, Heinrich Wilhelm. Das gelehrte Hannover oder Lexikon von Schriftstellern und Schriftstellerinnen die seit der Reformation gelebt haben und noch leben. Bremen: n. p., 1823.

Schiefer, K. Elise Bürger. Ein Beitrag zur deutschen Literatur- und Theatergeschichte. Frankfurt am Main: Diss., 1921.

Schindel, Carl Wilhelm Otto August von. Die deutschen Schriftstellerinnen des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts. Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1823.

Schröter, O. "Beiträge zur Familiengeschichte G. A. Bürgers." Mansfelder Blätter 7 (1893): 156-61.

Schulz, Ferdinand, Ed. G. A. Bürgers Ehestandsgeschichte. Geschichte der dritten Ehe G. A. Bürgers. Eine Sammlung von Acten-Stücken. Berlin: Schulz, 1812.

Schütze, Karl. Deutschlands Dichter und Schriftsteller von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart. Berlin: Bach, 1862.

Wurst, Karin A. Frauen und Drama am Ausgang des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts. (Accepted Manuscript).

Wurzbach, Wolfgang von. G. A. Bürger. Sein Leben und seine Werke. Göttingen, 1848.