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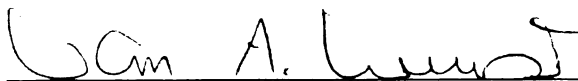
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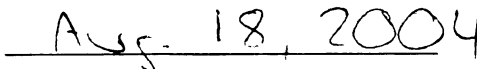
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**Love, Marriage, and Sexuality in Sophie Albrecht's Graumännchen**

**By**

**Sara Rosemary Luly**

**A THESIS**

**Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
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## ABSTRACT

### LOVE, MARRIAGE, AND SEXUALITY IN SOPHIE ALBRECHT'S GRAUMÄNNCHEN

By

Sara Rosemary Luly

Throughout the eighteenth century there were certain female authors whose goal it was through their literature to challenge contemporary notions of marriage, love and domesticity. Texts such as Graumännchen, oder die Burg Rabenbühl, eine Geistergeschichte altdeutschen Ursprungs by Sophie Albrecht challenge the prevalent love discourse and concept of the domestic sphere by fusing fairytale and gothic elements. Albrecht's use of fairytale elements is innovative. Her social criticism does not lie in the fairytale elements she employs, but rather in those genre expectations that are left unfulfilled in the mind of the reader. Albrecht uses these unfulfilled motifs along with gothic elements to describe societal problems facing women, including marital disillusionment, the painful loss of romantic love, and the dangers of the domestic sphere. Albrecht creates a type of pessimistic fairytale, one that does not offer a happy-ending but rather reveals the hardships eighteenth century women endured within oppressive domestic situations.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction .....	1
Summary of Fairytale Scholarship .....	6
Sophie Albrecht	
Biographical Information.....	14
Albrecht Scholarship .....	17
Love and Domesticity in Eighteenth Century Germany.....	21
<u>Graumännchen</u> .....	27
Conclusion .....	60
Bibliography .....	62



## INTRODUCTION

Literary fairytales and gothic literature have historically been used as tools of social criticism. Set in an unknown time and place, fairytales offer the distance necessary to voice discontent with contemporary society, especially among female authors, whose criticisms were generally not encouraged. Embedded in a symbolic language of magical objects, haunted spaces, and gruesome creatures, female authors found a medium with which they could express the problems that they faced in a male dominated society.<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that a body of female authored fairytales and gothic literature was created in the eighteenth century, a time in which women's role in society was undergoing drastic changes. The changing economy as well as the influences of the Enlightenment and *Empfindsamkeit* altered societal conceptions of marriage, family, and gender roles. These changes drastically affected the lives of women. Their entire existence was now relegated to the newly conceptualized domestic sphere, and defined by their roles as wife and mother. Contemporary concepts of love and marriage denied women their sexuality and created a "passionless" woman to ensure the stability of home life. It is within this social climate that female authors such as Sophie Albrecht used literature as a forum for addressing the inherent contradictions and revealing the hidden dangers of the new social order. Their literature provides a voice for women, whose perspective on these issues was not addressed by male-dominated, canonized literature, or the patriarchal society as a whole.

Graumännchen, oder die Burg Rabenbühl, eine Geistergeschichte Altdeutschen Ursprungs, by Sophie Albrecht, is a gothic fairytale which addresses the problems

women faced in eighteenth century German society. It traces the life of a German woman from early childhood to adulthood. The text presents the difficulties women face first as young women confronting their sexuality, and later as adults, trying to conform to the desexualized gender role which society has assigned them. It portrays the hardships and inherent contradictions of life in the domestic sphere: a realm established for their protection, but very much the cause of their victimization. The following thesis will analyze the way in which Albrecht uses fairytale and gothic elements to illustrate that the female role in society, as defined by contemporary notions of marital *zärtliche Liebe* and the new conceptualization of the domestic sphere, is not only detrimental to women but is the source of their unhappiness and victimization. Graumännchen does not depict a feminine alternative to male dominated society, nor does it reward the fully socialized heroine with a happy ending. Rather, it creates a unique type of pessimistic fairytale, one that traps the heroine in an unfulfilling social role and denies her any alternative. In doing so the text suggests that there is no "happy ending" awaiting those women who attempt to adhere to the social role assigned to women in marriage and the domestic sphere while arguing that feminine alternatives to the patriarchal social order are non-existent.

This criticism of contemporary society is embedded in Albrecht's innovative use of fairytale motifs and elements of gothic fiction. The text presupposes the reader's familiarity with the fairytale genre. The text engages the reader, first by establishing familiar fairytale motifs, and then leaving them unfulfilled. As a result, the text's criticism does not lie in its employment of familiar fairytale structures, but rather in those motifs that are left unfulfilled in the minds of the reader. The moments when the

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<sup>1</sup> There is also a male gothic tradition, which shares many of the same formal features and motifs.

fairytale fails to meet the reader's expectation draws attention to the underlying social criticism.

In addition to employing fairytale motifs, the text uses symbols and structures from the gothic tradition. The German gothic tradition has its roots in the *Ritter-*, *Räuber-*, and *Schauerroman*. (Hogle 66) The *Räuberroman* focused on the romantic outlaw, the *Ritterroman* takes place in a medieval setting, while the *Schauerroman* focused on the mysterious and supernatural. Although elements of all three of these traditions can be found in gothic literature, it was the *Schauerroman* which had the greatest influence on the gothic tradition. Schiller's Der Geisterseher was among the first German *Schauerroman* (Hogle 68). Other gothic authors include E.T.A. Hoffmann's and Elise Bürger (Hogle 6).

The female gothic tradition began with Ann Radcliffe and includes the works of such authors as Charlotte Bronte and Sophie Lee (Hogle 5). Female gothic literature of the time often used gothic elements to reveal domestic threats to feminine well-being. These symbols, such as haunted spaces, and grotesque creatures are incorporated into Graumännchen to strengthen its criticism of society.

Given the importance of fairytale structures and motifs in Graumännchen, an understanding of the tale requires an understanding of the genre itself. Therefore, the thesis will begin with a brief summary of fairytale scholarship and the various academic approaches with which fairytales have been analyzed. The works of Vladimir Propp, Max Lüthi, André Jolles, and Stith Thompson are of primary importance in understanding the structural aspects of the fairytale genre, and will therefore be discussed at length.

The thesis will include a brief biography of Sophie Albrecht and a summary of Albrecht scholarship. It will contain a summary of Albrecht's works, and the academic attention they have received. The purpose of this section is twofold: (1) it will illustrate that the social criticism made in Graumännchen reflects Albrecht's own rejection of social gender roles and (2) that the criticism of society present in Graumännchen is in keeping with her tradition of writing social subversive literature that questions contemporary gender roles.

The third section will address the role of women in eighteenth century society in order to provide the appropriate socio-historical context. Those aspects of social order which are most pertinent, namely the role of marriage, love, and the domestic sphere, will be the focus of this section. I will rely on Niklas Luhmann's Love as Passion to define the changing love paradigm and its effect on eighteenth century society. Luhmann's text analyzes the love paradigm in a general European context, and does not apply his theories specifically to German culture. As a result, I will integrate his findings with Günter Saße's Die Ordnung der Gefühle: Das Drama der Liebesheirat im 18. Jahrhundert which examines the love paradigm within the German context.<sup>2</sup> Finally, The Contested Castle by Kate Ferguson Ellis will explain the role of women within the domestic sphere, and draw the appropriate connections between the changing domestic sphere and conceptions of marital love in regard to gothic fiction.

Once this theoretical groundwork has been laid, the fourth section will examine the text itself, identifying and analyzing the gothic and fairytale structures within the socio-historical context created in section two. The text's use of fairytale structures will

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<sup>2</sup> See also Wurst "'Wilde Wünsche': The Discourse of Love in the Sturm und Drang" In Literatur des Sturm und Drang. Ed. David Hill. Rochester: Camden House, 2003.

be analyzed in terms of the social criticism Albrecht is presenting. Mieke Bal's Narratology will be used to examine the formal narrative elements of the text. This theory of narratology has been selected because it offers a greater degree of differentiation and precision in its terminology than other approaches. This degree of precision will be necessary to examine the shifts in narrative perspective. Stith Thompson's Index of fairytale motifs will be used to identify the fairytale motifs present in the text. The works of Lüthi and Jolles will be used to analyze the significance of these elements within the fairytale genre. Only after the traditional significance of these elements has been established can the innovative use of these motifs be examined. In addition, socio-historical information will be incorporated when necessary, to provide the correct social context for the interpretation of the text's criticism of society.

## SUMMARY OF FAIRYTALE SCHOLARSHIP

Although Graumännchen does not adhere to all of the genre characteristics established by structuralists such as Vladimir Propp and Max Lüthi, the text draws heavily upon fairytale motifs, and assumes the reader's understanding of the fairytale form. Therefore, any analysis of Graumännchen as a text will inevitably incorporate fairytale scholarship. It is for that reason that a brief overview of fairytale scholarship is provided.

The terms folktale and fairytale are closely related. The difference between these two literary forms does not lie in formal genre differences, but in differences in the origin of the tale itself. Tales that are derived from an oral tradition are termed “folktale” whereas tales that are purely literary traditions are termed “fairytales” (Zipes Companion 167). Although this distinction has been articulated by folktale and fairytale scholars, the two terms are frequently used interchangeably. The relationship between these two forms of literature is so close that an investigation of fairytale scholarship would include folktale scholarship as well. For this reason, theories of folktale analysis can and should be applied to fairytales (Zipes Companion 167).

In many ways German fairytale scholarship began with the work of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. They were the first scholars to systematically collect and, to a certain extent analyze, folktales and fairytales. Although there were authors before them who collected fairytales, they were the first to make statements regarding the methodology used to collect their tales and comments on the genre itself (Zipes Companion 445). Their interest in fairytales stemmed from feelings of nationalism. They believed that understanding the myths and tales of a people would lead to a better understanding of the

culture itself. They also hoped to promote a unified Germany by creating a national literature (Zipes Dreams 63). Scholars realize that the Grimm 's tales do not accurately reflect the oral tradition of the peasantry. Their tales are adaptations of stories told to them by well educated, bourgeois women.

During their lifetimes, the Grimm brothers published three editions of Kinder und Hausmärchen. In the final 1856 edition Wilhelm Grimm addresses briefly the question of fairytale origin. Grimm proposes two main hypotheses explaining the similarities among versions of European fairytales; (1) similarities in fairytales are probably the result of a common culture of origin and (2) fairytales are the remnants of broken down myths. The original myth must be constructed in order to properly interpret the fairytale (Thompson Folktale 370). These two hypotheses shaped early fairytale scholarship. The first hypothesis is the founding principle of the Indo-European theory while the second is the main thesis of the broken-down myth theory (Thompson Folktale 370).

With the emergence of folktale collections throughout European countries, early folklorists began to see similarities between texts from different countries. These similarities seemed to suggest a common heritage. As a result mid-19th century folktale scholarship focused almost exclusively on questions of origin. The question of folktale origin developed along-side advances in the field of comparative linguistics. Comparative linguistics was making great strides in re-constructing the Indo-European language (Thompson Folktale 371). From this field of study stemmed the belief in an Indo-European culture (Thompson Folktale 371). If there was one language from which all European languages formed, then by extension there must also have been one culture with one set of beliefs and myths. According to Indo-European scholars, all

contemporary folktales are descendants of these myths. Using comparative linguistics and mythology the original myths of the Indo-European people could be reconstructed resulting in a better understanding of contemporary folktales (Thompson Folktale 371). The efforts of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, as well as the work of Friedrich Max Müller, a comparative linguist who translated the Rig-Veda, resulted in the development of the Indo-European theory of folklore origin (Thompson Folktale 371).

During the early 20th century structuralism influenced fairy tale scholarship significantly. Structuralists are concerned with identifying the characteristics common to all fairytales. The text is viewed not as an individual text, but an example of a larger, general category of literature. This movement was a reaction to the changing nature of scholarship in the physical science (Propp 4). Structuralists believed that, like subjects of scientific study, literature needed to be systematically classified, organized, and studied on the basis of its structures (Propp 4).

In Einfache Formen, André Jolles identifies those universal elements, which are indicative of the fairytale genre. He argues that the moral message of the tale that is common to every tale in the genre is not moral in the philosophical sense, but rather is a naive moral that appeals to the reader's innate sense of an inequity (240). He calls this innate sense a *Gefühlsurteil* (240). According to Jolles, the form of the fairytale itself reinforces and justifies the readers own *Gefühlsurteil* and their need to have the imbalance corrected (240). Every structure and element in the plot, from the linear progression of the plot itself, to the happy ending justify our *Gefühlsurteil* and our naive moral (240).



The high point of structuralist interpretation occurred between 1950-1970.

During these years structuralism divided into two schools of thought. The first was created by Vladimir Propp, a Russian structuralist. His work Morphology of the Folktale which was first translated from Russian in 1928 gained international recognition after its translation into English in 1968 (Zipes Companion 447). In Morphology of the Folktale Propp identifies function as the basic unit of fairytale analysis. Function is defined by Propp as the effect an action has on the plot (19). He also creates a system of analysis for studying the relations of functions within the tale. Function is the smallest unit of a fairytale, because it remains constant even if the characters, or the specifics of their actions, change (19). Thirty-one universal functions are identified in this book. In addition to identifying functions, Propp also identifies the character types present in folklore. There are 7 general character types; villain, donor, helper, sought for person, dispatcher, hero, false hero (72-73). Each character type has a limited number of actions available to them and must act within the limitations of their sphere of action (72).

Propp's analysis has two implications for any formal analysis of folktales. The most obvious of these is that there are a limited number of functions that plot motifs can play in a folktale. The second thesis builds on the first; if there are a limited number of functions available to the fairytale plot, then all plots will have essentially the same structure. The folktale follows a linear path of narration, with each function building on the previous function. As a result, there is a predominately linear, chronological and formulaic structure for fairytales.

Claude Levi-Strauss created the second school of structuralist thought in his essay "The Structural Study of Myth". He maintains that there is a basic thought processes

behind all myths (130). This thought process can be uncovered by analyzing and comparing individual structures of each myth. Levi-Strauss begins by condensing the myth to its basic elements. He then lists the elements chronologically, grouping similar elements together (121). When the transitions between these element bundles is analyzed, the underlying thought process behind the myth emerges (124).

Max Lüthi argues that the universal form of fairytales is the aspect of the genre that makes these tales enticing to readers. Despite variation in fairytales, there is a basic type (*Grundtyp*) of European folk fairytale. His goal was to determine the essence of a folktale (Lüthi European Folktale 3). In his book The European Folktale he identifies five characteristics common to folktales; one-dimensionality (4), depthlessness (11), abstract style (24), isolation and universal interconnection (37), and sublimation and all-inclusiveness (66). Lüthi argues that identifying the characteristics of this *Grundtyp* will not only lead us to a better understand of the genre itself, but also explain the universal appeal of folktales.

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century a psychoanalytic field of literary interpretation emerged. Both Freud and Jung argued that there are connections between fairytales, and unconscious images represented in dreams. In his essay "The Occurrence in Dreams of Material from Fairy Tales" Freud states that fairytale motifs appear in patient's dreams as a symbolic method of expressing deeper psychological problems. These problems are almost exclusively sexual in nature. Analyzing these fairytale motifs uncovers the patient's problem, and also leads to a better understanding of the fairytale itself (283). Jung argues that there are symbols in fairytales accessible to a "collective unconscious" (Zipes Companion 446). Unlike Freud, Jung shifts the focus away from sexuality.

Fairytales are meaningful across cultures because they contain those symbols that are universally understood, due to the fact that they stem from a collective unconscious (Zipes Companion 446).

In his book The Uses of Enchantment, Bruno Bettelheim uses Freudian child psychology to explore the ways in which fairytales can be used to aid children throughout various stages of development. He analyzes specific fairytales in order to determine the way in which they are used by children to overcome difficulties of childhood including overcoming oral fixation, resolving their oedipal complexes and understanding their budding sexuality. According to Bettelheim, fairytales have a variety of different Freudian interpretations. The child's stage of personal development will determine which of these stages is more useful to him/her at a particular point in time (15). He argues that these tales are important tools in child development and advises teachers and parents of the best way to use these tales to aid children. He also argues against the sanitation of original tales. He believes that the violence present in the older forms of the tales, specifically the Grimms' versions, are beneficial to the development of a child because they offer a space in which the child can work through their feelings of anger and their desire for violence.

Several scholars have offered Marxist interpretations of fairytales. Among them is Johannes Merkel. According to Merkel, fairytales provide people with a form of utopia and hope for the future (56). In his essay "Der ursprüngliche Realismus der den 'Märchen' zugrundeliegenden Volksliteratur" Merkel explains how fairytales are utopian because they teach that repressed individuals can overcome their difficulties with intellect and diligence (56). Characters that are born to lower classes or denied access to various

basic resources (food, money) can improve their situation and become equals with those of higher social status (Merkel 56). This is a utopian message in that it does not reflect the realities of society in which social mobility was severely limited.

Ernst Bloch offers a similar interpretation. In his chapter on fairy tales in The Principle of Hope Bloch maintains that fairytales are utopian because they depict a world in which individuals can improve their social standing through cleverness and resourcefulness (354). It is possible to overcome social and natural inequalities. Poor people can rise within the social structure and become nobility. This possibility is a utopian message of hope. In addition, fairytales offer the utopia of a life without desires. Characters are frequently given objects in fairytales to provide them with things that they need. These objects are symbolic of the ideal State, which will also provide fully for its people (357). In this way, Bloch combines both fairytales and the promise of a socialist utopia, one in which people are provided for completely by the State (357).

Finally, several feminist fairytale scholars have addressed the representation of gender in fairytales. Many feminist scholars have called for a need to reassess current folklore cannon and to address the sexist nature of folklore scholarship. Claire Farrer reveals the sexist nature of fairytale scholarship to date, and calls into question fairytale canon formation (Zipes Companion 158). Shawn Jarvis and Jeannine Blackwell's The Queen's Mirror compiles a collection of German fairytales written by women, and in doing so, offer alternative texts to the fairytale cannon. In the afterward Jarvis, compares the motifs found in fairytales written by women to the motifs in fairytales by their male counterparts (361-366). In doing so she analyzes the social critiques and experimental nature of many of these tales.

Other feminist scholars call into question the traditional readings of canonized fairytales. Maria Lieberman, for example, argues against the idea that fairytales reflect “universal” truths and experiences (Zipes Companion 159). Instead she identifies the elements previously labeled “universal” as highly sexist in nature (Zipes Companion 159). Several scholars choose to focus on fairytales' depiction of gender roles. Karen Rowe argues that fairytales confine women to restrictive passive roles (Zipes Companion 159). Ruth Bottigheimer and Maria Tatar also examine women's roles in fairytales. In Grimm's Bad Girls and Bold Boys, Ruth Bottigheimer examines the way in which the Grimm's editing practices effected the portrayal of women in the tales. She takes issue with Bettelheim's assertion that fairy tales can be read "without gender distinction" (168) and asserts that the Grimm fairy tales provide a paradigm of "gender-specific and gender-appropriate" behavior (168). In Off With Their Heads! Tatar examines the portrayal of women in fairytales. According to Tatar women are portrayed as children in traditional fairytales (xxvii). These tales illustrated the socially "correct" role of women. In doing so acted they as a tool of gender socialization (96). Tatar feels that the tales should be re-written to reflect contemporary social ideals, including modern gender roles (229).

In conclusion, the focus of folktale scholarship has shifted significantly since its conception in the mid-nineteenth century. Although many early theories regarding folktales are no longer supported, each school of thought has contributed to our present day knowledge of folktales and influenced the way in which we view the genre.

## SOPHIE ALBRECHT

### 1. Biographical Information

Biographical information on Sophie Albrecht is scarce. The most extensive biographical information can be found in Berit Christine Ruth Royer's *Sophie Albrecht (1757-1840) Im Kreis der Schriftstellerinnen um 1800: eine literatur und kulturwissenschaftliche Werk-Monographie*. Other works featuring biographic information include Karin Wurst's *Frauen in Drama* and Ruth Dawson's *The Contested Quill*. In her article "Reconstructing Women's Literary Relationships: Sophie Albrecht and Female Friendship" Dawson focuses on Albrecht's network of female friends, and examines the role they provided in offering support to one another as female writers. In addition to these sources, *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, as well as *Deutsches Theater-Lexikon: Biographisches und Bibliographisches Handbuch* contain brief biographic entries on Sophie Albrecht.

Sophie Albrecht was born Sophie Baumer in December 1757 in Erfurt. She was the daughter of Dr. Johann Paul Baumer and Johanna Maria Rebekka Christine Baumer (von Teutzel) (322 *Deutsche Biographie*). Although little is known about Albrecht's childhood or immediate family, personal correspondences between family and friends indicate that she was an energetic child who was known for her tomboy behavior (Royer 32). As a child Albrecht had great freedom, and was allowed many privileges which were, in general, not extended to girls at this time. Her father took great interest in her education, and hoped that someday she might study at the university (Royer 33). Albrecht's life was altered significantly when her father died in 1771 (Royer 39). The

following year the fifteen-year-old Sophie Baumer married Johann Albrecht, a former medical student who had lived with the family for several years (Royer 39).

In the four years following their marriage, Johann taught medicine at the university. In 1776 he was appointed personal physician to Count Manteuffel and the Albrechts moved to Reval, Russia (Royer 40). For the next four years the couple traveled throughout Russia and Germany (Royer 41). Both Johann and Sophie were interested in literature and it was after their marriage that Sophie began her career as a poet and published several works; both independently and in her husband's anthologies. They returned to Germany in 1782, the same year in which Sophie's mother died (Royer 43).

Once in Germany, the couple began their work in the theater. In 1783 Sophie made her debut performance with the Grossmann acting troupe in Frankfurt and Johann left his medical career to begin writing for the theater (Royer 51). Two years later Sophie left the Grossmann troupe and joined the Bondinische Troupe. The next several years were filled with travel, as the couple moved from city to city writing and performing (Royer 41).

Sophie Albrecht excelled in her new career. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, she was one of the most successful actresses in Germany. Her substantial annual income of 1,000 *Reichstaler* gave her financial independence. The social status associated with her career freed her from the traditional female gender role to which bourgeois German women were forced to adhere (Royer 59). Sophie was active in the female artistic community, and offered financial support as well as advice to aspiring female writers (Dawson Reconstructing 173).

In 1795 the couple moved to Altona where they took over direction of the Altona National Theater and shortly thereafter, in 1796, the couple divorced (Royer 76). In the same year Sophie left the National Theater which closed two years later due to financial difficulties (Royer 76).

Johann Albrecht died in March of 1814 (Royer 96). After Johann's death Sophie no longer pursued a career in the theater and lived a more traditional bourgeois lifestyle (Royer 98). She supported herself with her writing but had limited success. Her financial situation worsened significantly over the years, and by the early 1830s she relied on friends for financial support (Royer 100). Albrecht died penniless on November 16 1840 at St. Georg Hospital (Royer 102).



## 2. Albrecht Scholarship

Whether the work under investigation is her love poetry or her cookbook, scholars have been fascinated with Albrecht's criticism of the social roles assigned to women in love, marriage and the home. Albrecht's works reveal the hardships women undergo in eighteenth century society, as well as celebrate female sexuality and passion.

Unfortunately, many of Albrecht's works have been overlooked by scholars. Few academic interpretations are available, and those that have been published focus almost exclusively on Albrecht's early works. The works which have received the most scholarly attention are her drama "Theresgen" and her collections of love poetry.

Albrecht's poetry was innovative for women's literature in its depiction of romantic love and sexuality. In The Contested Quill Ruth Dawson examines the way in which love, passion and virtue are combined in Albrecht's poetry. Dawson describes how Albrecht pushed the standards of feminine modesty in her description of sexual romance outside of marriage (292). Unlike other female poets of the time who went to great lengths to justify love within an acceptable social context, Albrecht offered no such justification, and focused instead on the intense emotion associated with love (Dawson 286). During her life, Albrecht published three anthologies of poems, interspersed with short prose and dramas; Gedichte und Schauspiele (1781), Gedichte und Prosaische Aufsätze (1785), and a third volume including a re-printing of the first two in 1791 (Deutsche Biographie 322).

Many of Albrecht's other works addressed issues of love and marriage from a feminist perspective. Her play *Theresgen* first appeared in Gedichte und Schauspiele, addressing issues of love and marriage, this work has received the most scholarly

attention. According to Susanne Kord, the drama explores the fictional nature of the love rhetoric during the Sturm und Drang period (252). Kord also examines Albrecht's innovative use of space with her integration of the city and country spheres. In Frauen in Drama Karin Wurst examines the partner selection process depicted in *Theresgen* (74). She states that the drama expresses the conflict between new bourgeois ideals of romantic love including freedom of choice in marriage and the less progressive social reality (74). Ruth Dawson examines the way in which patriarchal forces repress female passion in *Theresgen* (Contested 302-313). In another article, Dawson examines the role that "class boundary patrolling" plays in *Theresgen* with its depiction of eighteenth century marriage (Catherine 18). An experimental prose piece entitled "Fragmente aus dem Tagebuch einer Unglücklichen", describes a disappointing love relationship (Dawson Contested 319).

Albrecht wrote two gothic fairytales at the turn of the century. The first fairytale was published under three different titles. It was published in 1797 under the titles Das Höfliche Gespenst and Legenden. It appeared seven years later under the title Ida von Duba, das Mädchen im Walde: eine romantische Geschichte (1805) (Royer 94, Dawson Contested 336). This shift in literary genre reflected the changes that were occurring in Albrecht's personal life. Following her divorce in 1796, Albrecht abandoned her work with love poetry and developed a preoccupation with gothic themes and fairytale literature. Both gothic fairytales criticize contemporary notions of marriage and love. These criticisms reflect Albrecht's views on marriage, influenced no doubt by her own failed marriage.

Unlike Albrecht's love poetry which expressed love outside of marriage, Das Höfliche Gespenst depicts marriage without love (Dawson Contested 339). According to Dawson, the tale criticizes marriages of convenience. Like Graumännchen, the tale questions the assumption that marriage is the "happy ending" (Dawson 340). Royer offers a different interpretation. Whereas Dawson views the failed marriage in the tale as criticism of arranged marriages, Royer argues that they represent a criticism of the patriarchal society and the women who support it (256). She focus instead on the heroine's search for self identity, as well as the homoerotic undertones of the fairytale (256).

Two years later in 1799 Albrecht published Graumännchen, oder die Burg Rabenbühl eine Geistergeschichte altdeutschen Ursprungs. Royer's interpretation is the only scholarly work available for this text. According to Royer, Agnes' victimization is caused by her obedience and acceptance of patriarchal gender norms (261). It is only after Agnes rejects these gender expectations and takes a more active role that she is able to make positive changes in her situation (270). Royer also examines the text's criticism of the Catholic Church, and the unchecked power that it wields (268). Finally, Royer interprets the conflict with Graumännchen as representative of Agnes' fear of childbirth (270). Albrecht's interest in the gothic continued with the publishing of Romantische Dichtung der aelteren christlichen Kirche (1808) (Dawson Contested 342).

Shortly before her death, in an attempt to supplement her meager income, Albrecht published a cookbook. Dawson notes that even in a cookbook, Albrecht was able to voice her opinion on marital relationships (Dawson Contested 343). She included an introduction, which warned wives about the nature of their husbands (Royer 102).

This cookbook appeared under two different titles in 1839, Erfurter Kochbuch für die bürgerliche Küche and Thüringisches Kochbuch für die bürgerliche Küche. Both books were relatively successful, and publication continued until 1865 (Dawson Contested 343).

Throughout Albrecht's literary career she has addressed women's role in society. She is a proponent of female sexuality, and opposes oppressive patriarchal forces. In all of her works we see subversive messages that questions prevailing social ideals and challenges contemporary gender roles. Graumännchen also follows this pattern of social criticism. The text questions prevailing notions of love, marriage and domesticity, and in doing so criticizes eighteenth century gender roles.

## LOVE AND DOMESTICITY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GERMANY

Prior to the eighteenth century, extensive kinship networks identified individuals and determined their status within society. These ties, formed by marriage, had a significant impact on all aspects of a person's life. (Saße 13) In his study of the depiction of love in drama, Günter Saße writes: "*In traditionellen Gesellschaften, in denen die Abkunft in vielfacher Hinsicht entschied, welchen Stand und Rang man in der Gesellschaft einnahm, hatte die Heirat im Vergleich zu heute einen ungleich höheren Stellenwert*" (Saße 13). Marriage had far reaching implications for extended families, affecting both their social and financial positions within society (Saße 13). As a result, marriage was not viewed as a relationship, but rather a contract arranged with the goal of maximizing the family's social and economic benefit. Due to the importance of this decision, and the implications it had on the entire family, partner selection was not left to subjective emotions or "chance". Instead, partners were selected on the basis of social and financial status and marriages were arranged to ensure the maximum benefit to the family.

As bourgeois society emerged in the eighteenth century, economic and social changes eliminated the need for such arranged marriages (Luhmannn 145). Social institutions replaced previous kinship ties, and extended families were no longer affected by their relatives' marriages (Saße 21). Families were now viewed as intimate units, re-created with each new generation (Luhmannn 146). Marriage, as a result, became a relationship between two individuals, without far reaching implications for their families.

(Luhmannn 146, Saße 21). Once economic considerations no longer governed the selection process exclusively, other criteria had to be chosen to justify partner selection.

It was within this social climate that the concept of a loved-based marriage, or *Liebesheirat* emerged (Saße 19). Love provided criteria for legitimizing marriage after the institution lost much of its economic importance. Luhmannn describes how love turned the uncertainty of partner selection into " subjective certainty" and was used as "a sort of magical substitute for foresight" (147). It promised criteria for legitimizing a potential match and offered order for an institution that appeared order-less.

The *Liebesheirat* was a product of bourgeois morality and enforced Enlightenment concepts of individuality. The emphasis that bourgeois society placed on individuality caused social status in relationships to be devalued (Luhmannn 131). *Liebesheirat* provided new criteria to evaluate a partner in a society in which objective criteria (i.e., money and social status) had lost much of their influence (Luhmannn 146). In addition, *Liebesheirat* created meaningful relationships in which individuals could overcome the negative side effects of individuality (Saße 25). Saße explains:

*Die Suche nach sinnstiftender Zweisamkeit, die Hoffnung, in der Liebe Einsamkeit, Egozentrik, und Isolation zu überwinden, der Wunsch, die eigene Subjektivität im Bezug zum anderen zu entfalten, sich selbst zu fühlen im Fühlen des Gegenüber, im Gespräch den unverstellten Ausdruck des Inneren zu erfahren - all dies verweist auf psycho-, sozial - und mentalitätsgeschichtliche Kontexte, die Liebe in jeweils unterschiedlicher Gestalt erscheinen lassen. (25-26)*

Marriages based on love provided the intimate relationship necessary to meet the needs of an increasingly individualized population.

The concept of *Liebesheirat* was widely accepted and by the eighteenth century contemporaries argued that "*Liebe allein soll es (...) sein, was Mann und Frau verbindet*" (Saße 9). Love as the justification for marriage was not without its downfalls, however. Several problems were inherent in a definition of marriage that required love. The most problematic of these was defining the nature of marital love.

When love first became the justification for marriage, the only available concept of love was *amour passion* (Luhmannn 146). This type of love was not appropriate for the institution of marriage. Due to its passionate nature, *amour passion* required constant innovation (Luhmannn 144) and as a result, lacked the stability necessary for marriage (Luhmannn 146). Marriage required a "more peaceful" and less "turbulent, passionate atmosphere" (Luhmannn 148) which could only be obtained through a more stable form of love.

Slowly, a new model of marital love emerged. This love concept, referred to by Saße as "*zärtliche Liebe*", was void of sexuality and passion (39). *Zärtliche Liebe* rejected the "*Egozentrik der Wollust*" and instead grounded itself in "*das Wohl des anderen zur Bedingung des eigenen Glücks*" (Saße 40). It was a selfless, moral love which emphasized equality and friendship between individuals (Saße 41). Based on friendship and the happiness of the partner, *zärtliche Liebe* was more stabile than *amour passion*, and as a result could be maintained longer within the marital relationship.

*Zärtliche Liebe* as the basis of marriage was not without its own set of problems, however. A contradiction becomes apparent, when the issue of sexuality is addressed. *Zärtliche Liebe* is based on friendship, and the absence of sexuality. Contemporaries argued against marriages based on sexual love, and maintained that sexuality was

detrimental to the marriage (Saße 44). Many contemporary authors including Sophie LaRoche and Gellert depicted the dangers that sexual desire posed to marriage (Saße 44). Yet marriage was the only social institution in which sex was allowed. How then could marriage, whose main goal was procreation, be grounded in a type of love which excluded sexuality? This contradiction became a topic of debate. Contemporaries tried to bridge this ideological discrepancy by defining marriage as a friendship that "*zum Zweck der Kindererziehung, Sexualität zulassen darf*" (Saße 41). This explanation was not an adequate solution, however, and the inherent contradiction remained. By the turn of the nineteenth century romantics such as Friedrich Schlegel proposed new concepts of love which incorporated sexuality (Saße 49). In *Lucinde* Schlegel sets forth a new conception of *Liebesehe* which binds sexuality and love (Saße 49). *Graumännchen*, however, does not present this form of love as a viable option. This text keeps with the traditional concept of *zärtliche Liebe*, and forces the heroine to choose between sexuality and marital stability.

Alongside these developments in the definition love, the eighteenth century society re-defined the domestic sphere. The new role of the domestic sphere was to provide a safe haven for the intimate family unit (Ellis 37). The emergence of this private sphere led to the complete separation of domestic and public life. As a result, gender roles became increasingly compartmentalized. Men represented the family in the public sphere, and women were relegated to the domestic sphere and defined by their role as wife and mother (Ellis xiv).

In order to fulfill the role of wife and mother required by the current conception of the domestic sphere, society was forced to re-define female sexuality. Earlier



conceptions of female sexuality viewed it as a destructive force. Societal perceptions of women, heavily influenced by the Genesis creation myth (Ellis 20), perceived them as the source of temptation and weakness (Ellis 11). If left unsupervised, their female sexuality would run rampant, undermining the structure of patriarchal society (Ellis 11). When viewed as sexual creatures, women required constant male supervision (Ellis 11).

Once relegated to the domestic sphere, women were no longer under the direct supervision of their husbands. Women were left at home, unsupervised, while their husbands worked in the public sphere. If women were seducers by nature, as the creation myth suggests, then the abundance of unsupervised time would inevitably lead to infidelity. Unchecked female sexuality would run rampant, and the "structure of patriarchy would collapse under these new social arrangements" (Ellis 11). Sexual women represented a threat to the stability of the domestic sphere, and an unstable domestic sphere threatened the well-being of society in general. As a result, female sexuality had to be redefined. A new concept of woman emerged, one who "sees, hears, and therefore does no evil" (Ellis 11). Women were told to give up knowledge (specifically sexual knowledge) in return for the safety that the domestic sphere was to provide (Ellis 11). This new concept of women, which denied them sexuality and passion was created (Ellis 11). These passionless women did not require the supervision of men, and were therefore the stable force necessary to provide the foundation of home life (Ellis 11). This new concept of woman was also more compatible with the concept of *zärtliche Liebe*, which sacrificed sexuality for marital stability.

The re-definition of woman and her place within society is at the core of Graumännchen. As we will see in the following section, Graumännchen illustrates the

necessity of sacrificing sexuality for the stability of marriage. Contrary to the prevailing notions of contemporary discourse, Albrecht does not celebrate the new, desexualized woman, but rather depicts this phenomenon as a loss for all women.

## GRAUMÄNNCHEN

Graumännchen incorporates elements from two genres: gothic literature and the fairytale. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women became active in the development of both of these literary traditions. Both gothic literature and fairytales combine magical elements and the supernatural. This removes any criticism from contemporary society and placing it at a safe distance from the reader. As a result, it was easier, and more acceptable for women to write within these genres. As a result, gothic literature and fairytales were used as a medium through which women's issues could be expressed.

Both gothic fiction and fairytales blend elements of time. Gothic fiction is set in "an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space" which includes places such as a castle, a foreign palace, or a vast prison, among others (Hogle 2). These spaces are frequently haunted or contain some secret from the past (Hogle 2). The antiquated setting is essential to the genres' subversive message. It removes social criticism from the immediate surroundings, and places it in a less threatening past. There it can be explored and the issues resolved (Hogle 6). In this way, gothic literature uses the past to offer solutions for the present and future. Fairytales make the same use of antiquated spaces. It is for this reason that this form of literary expression was especially appealing to female writers who were discouraged from writing social criticisms (Zipes Dreams 39). Set in the past, fairytales could indirectly offer hope for a utopian future (Seifert 23).

Ann Ronald argues that there is something inherently fairytale-like about the gothic genre. She describes the gothic formula as "an adult fairytale complete with a

happily-ever-after ending" (178). It is therefore not surprising that the two genres should merge in a single text. These two literary traditions are fused in Graumännchen. It is within the gothic and fairytale elements that the author's social criticism resides.

The text consists of a frame narrative, which traces the life of the protagonist and her family. This narrative surrounds a secondary, embedded narrative, which is the history of the antagonist Graumännchen and the Burg in which he resides. The introduction of the text can be further divided into a frame and embedded story. The story begins with a description of Liebetreu's purchase of the Burg. This is interrupted by a flashback, describing the life of the previous owner. The story returns to the frame narrative, which is interrupted again with a flashback. This flashback describes the nature of Liebetreu's first marriage, his wife's death, and the circumstances in which Agnes was sent to a convent. The end of this flashback marks the return to the frame story. Although this tale employs a variety of fairytale formulas and motifs, its narrative structure is atypical for a fairytale. In his work The Fairytale as Art Form and Portrait of Man Max Lüthi identifies the structures and motifs characteristic of the fairytale genre. He illustrates how these elements are used to enhance the aesthetics of the fairytale. According to Lüthi, the fairytale structure is characterized by "clarity, compactness, and exactitude" (54). He concludes that fairytales contain simplistic, linear narratives, use simple character types and avoid lengthy descriptions. Lüthi states that although the fairytale "employs at times two-strand narration" it makes "no actual use of flashback" (56). The absence of flashbacks and retrospection enables the fairytale to maintain what Lüthi describes as its "forward-directed goal orientation" (56).

Jeannine Blackwell supports the assertion that a simplistic narrative style is not representative of women's fairytales in the eighteenth century. Female fairytale authors made use of "encapsulated narratives and narrators and intertwined levels of time, historicity, fantasy, and fantastic realism" (6). These stylistic characteristics differentiate their fairytales from traditional fairytales, and place them between "naive, 'anonymous' folktale and the Romantic literary masterpiece" (3-4). It is therefore not surprising that Sophie Albrecht's fairytales deviate from the simplistic formula identified by Lüthi. Many of his genre observations do apply, however, and will be examined as they appear in this narrative.

Graumännchen is narrated through the perspective of an external narrator, who interacts with both the reader and the characters in the text. Mieke Bal's Narratology defines an external narrator as one that "never refers explicitly to itself as a character" (22). External narrators are also used to disassociate the reader from characters within the text (Bal 29). Characters remain figure types that lack individuality. Simple characters are mandatory in the traditional fairytale to focus attention on the plot. Traditional fairytales eliminate any elements, including lengthy descriptions and complex characterization, that would draw attention away from the plot (Jolles 231).

In the course of the narrative, the perspective shifts and the events are described using character-bound narrators. A text has a character-bound narrator if "the T is to be identified with a character in the fabula it itself narrates" (Bal 22). This shift generally occurs during moments of intense emotion. If the purpose of the external narrator is to create distance between the reader and the text, then the character-bound narrator is able to provide insight to the character's emotions. One such shift occurs while Agnes laments

the loss of her love Justus. She cries out "*Justus! wenn ich dich verlohren habe, will ich erst Nonne werden.*" (34). This first person exclamation intensifies the emotion, and draws the reader into the text.

It is the external narrator who begins the tale, opening Graumännchen with a typical fairytale phrase "*Vor uralter Zeit*". This opening is similar to "*Es war einmal*" or "once upon a time" in that it refers to an unspecified time in the past. Several scholars have analyzed the role of these openings to the fairytale genre. Bloch argues that the geographic and historical vagueness of the fairytale opening represent the utopian element of fairytales. These openings represent an idyllic "*Anderswo*", where life is brighter and easier (Bloch 33). Although there is merit to this interpretation, it seems out of place in a fairytale such as Graumännchen, which is clearly not utopian. Andre Jolles offers a similar interpretation, but one that lacks the utopian elements. He states that fairytale openings indicate a departure from reality and rational thought (Jolles 244). They allow the reader to enter this fictitious setting where fairytale logic must be applied. Lüthi argues that it is the ability of fairytale openings to fictionalize the text and indicate the limits of the narrative. This is fundamental to the fairytale structure. (Lüthi 49) Neither of these interpretations, however, sufficiently explains the importance of the opening in terms of constructing an effective social criticism. Here we turn to the works of Zipes and Seifert. Zipes argues that during times of censorship fairytales were used as indirect means of criticism (Zipes Dreams 39). Seifert explains that, set within the past, fairytales are able to indirectly criticize aspects of society and provide hope for the future (Seifert 23). The distancing and fictionalizing effect of the opening line was essential to the effectiveness of fairytales as a tool of indirect social criticism.

In the fairytale's introduction, the external narrator describes Liebetreu's purchase of the Burg Rabenbühl. Little information regarding the previous owner of the Burg is provided. We know that the previous owner committed heinous crimes while owning the Burg. Which prompted him to sell the land and flee to the Holy Land where he could atone for the crimes he committed (4). At the request of the previous owner, Liebetreu changes the fortress' name from Rabenbühl to Waldschütz (4). Rabenbühl is formed from the German word for raven, a bird which frequently symbolizes death. Waldschütz is derived from the German word *schützen*, meaning "to protect". Changing the name to Waldschütz is just one of the ways that Liebetreu tries to disassociate the fortress from its violent past.

It is at this point that the narrator addresses the reader directly, insisting that the missing biographical information is inconsequential. "...*das aber auch beynahe alles ißt, was wir euch liebe Leser, von ihm sagen können; auch werdet ihr nicht viel dabei verlieren...*" (2). This non-narrative comment draws attention to the information by insisting that it is of little importance. According to Bal, non-narrative comments are argumentative comments that exist outside of the fabula (33). It is within these comments that "ideological statements" are frequently made (31). However, this non-narrative comment does not provide ideological information. Instead, the narrator's introduction and subsequent dismissal of this information creates a sense of mystery. The original owner of the Burg is a ghostly figure that haunts the text, and draws attention to the mystery of the Burg itself. The shift in narrative perspective is indicated by the direct address of the reader as "*lieber Leser*". This type of interaction with the reader occurs at several points in the text. The narrator's interaction with the reader creates another layer

of narration, one that is situated beyond the frame narrative. It is reminiscent of the fairytale genre's roots in the oral tradition. Other types of narrator interjections exist, and will be analyzed as they occur during Graumännchen.

The Burg Liebetreu purchases is quite old, and is filled with ruins and remnants of battle. These elements are indicative of the gothic literary tradition. In his forward to The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction, Jerrold Hogle states that gothic fiction generally takes place "in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space" (Hogle 2). These places include, but are not limited to, castles, prisons, subterranean crypts, graveyards, large old houses, or aging cities (Hogle 2). Gothic elements abound in the initial description of the Burg:

*Viele verfallne Gefängnisse, die noch, selbst in ihren Ruinen, welche doch jetzt das Tageslicht milderte, schrecklich waren; Gerippe, die in Retten hingen, Fallthüren, die in zackigten Felsen endeten, andere, die in bodenlose Abgründe führten, wurden gefunden(...)* (5)

The text makes reference to prisons, ruins, fallen towers, and bottomless pits (5). While most works of gothic fiction choose one or two of these typical elements, Graumännchen heaps all of them into one description. It is within these spaces that characters in gothic literature are haunted by secrets from the past (Hogle 2). Hogle states that these hauntings can be psychological or physical and frequently take the form of ghosts, monsters or specters (Hogle 2). Hauntings in the gothic tradition represent repressed issues. They can be manifestations of either personal conflicts, or larger societal problems (Hogle 4). In the case of Graumännchen, the ruins are linked to the dark acts of the previous owner. Their presence indicates the existence of unresolved conflicts. It



also foreshadows difficulty for Liebetreu and his family. Although these acts are never described, their heinous nature is reflected in the state of the Burg. The choice of setting (a fortress) as opposed to a castle or village, has violent implications. A fortress is not only a living space, but a site of battle and conflict. After viewing the ruins Liebetreu becomes convinced, "*daß dessen Erbauer ein großer, mächtiger Mann gewesen, aber auch zugleich, daß dieser mächtige Mann auch ein hartes Herz besessen*" (5). The previous owner is characterized by his acts, which are visualized in the architectural space of the fortress.

After purchasing the Burg, Liebetreu comes in contact with the villagers. They are superstitious people, who frighten many of Liebetreu's servants with ghost stories and legends about the Burg. Liebetreu does not believe in ghost stories. "*Ritter Liebetreu war kein Freigeist, kein sogenannter Starkdenker (...)das, was alle, die ihn umgaben, gesehen haben wollten, sah und hörte er nicht*" (7). His inability to believe in the supernatural is criticized in the text. This initial characterization reveals his primary character flaw, his inability to foresee dangerous situations. Instead of heeding the warnings of the locals, he organizes the reconstruction of the fortress. He believes that reconstructing the fortress will result in a decrease of superstition among the townspeople. This hypothesis proves correct, and local legend gradually fades away.

The reconstruction of the Burg is juxtaposed with a description of Liebetreu's previous marriage. Rebuilding the Burg is an avoidance technique that Liebetreu uses. The text explains that he is happier occupying himself "*mit Bau und Reisen*" than finding a wife (11). The project consumes his energies and his thoughts.

The decrepit state of the Burg reflects Liebetreu's inner turmoil. His marriage to Agnes (the protagonist's mother who shares her name) was an unhappy one. It ended in betrayal, in the form of infidelity, and death. The phrase "*ohne Liebe*" is repeatedly used to describe the nature of their relationship (11). "*Seine erste Ehe war sehr unglücklich; ohne Liebe reichte ihm die stolze Agnes die Hand, ohne Liebe gab sie ihm seine Tochter Agnes, ohne Liebe trug er alle ihre Launen Jahre lang*" (11). This sentence reflects eighteenth century concepts of marriage which link love to marital success. Although love was still not used to justify partner choice, lack of love was used as a justification not to marry (Luhmannn 129). The text suggests that it is the absence of love with causes Liebetreu's marriage to fail. On her deathbed his wife admits to acts of infidelity. Both of these events indicate mutual incompatibility and are related to the failure of the marriage. Afraid to love again, Liebetreu buries himself in his work (11).

In addition to offering a commentary on the role of love in marriage, the description of Liebetreu's marriage is used as a tool for his characterization. His dissatisfaction with a loveless marriage indicates his romantic side. His romantic nature is even reflected in his name, Liebetreu, or "true to love". He adheres to the contemporary love concept, which views marriage and love as intertwined. His compassion is revealed in mistreatment of Agnes. On her deathbed Agnes asks to be forgiven for her infidelity. Liebetreu suppresses his anger and responds with the forgiveness befitting a Christian. "*(M)ußte der edle Mann alle seine Stärke ausrufen, um als ein Christ zu handeln*" (11). Liebetreu is not completely without resentment towards his wife, however. After her death, he sends his daughter Agnes, the reminder of his unhappy marriage, to live in a convent. In doing so, Liebetreu punishes his daughter for the pain that his wife inflicted.

Many female authored fairytales negatively depict convents. In tales such as Das Leben der Hochgräfin Gritta von Rattenzuhausbeiuns by Bettine and Gisela von Arnim, heroines are sent to convents against their will. In von Arnim's text the convent is a type of prison where the girls are mistreated and also kept against their will. Frequently these convents are juxtaposed with an alternative female community. In Gritta the girls escape the convent and find peace in an "autonomous female community" of their own creation, removed from society (Jarvis Spare the Rod 80). Other tales such as Boadicea and Velleda by Benedikte Naubert also contain a utopian female community. (Jarvis and Blackwell 39-74) Jarvis identifies these female communities as alternatives to marriage: "Sometimes the experience of the female community outside traditional society has a greater appeal (than marriage)" (364). Like the previously mentioned texts, the convent in Graumännchen is not idealized; rather it is a form of punishment. Although Agnes' life in the convent is not described directly, several passages indicate that she was miserable there. She does nothing but cry while in the convent (13) and later at home she states that she would choose death over returning. The alternative to the convent, which would be life with her family and eventually her husband, is also problematic. In doing so, the fairytale breaks with both traditional and women's fairytale traditions. Graumännchen addresses the problems of marriage while simultaneously denying the existence of an alternative utopian female community.

After several years Liebetreu marries "*eine große schöne*" Italian woman named Athlene (also spelled Athlena). The name Athlene bears a striking resemblance to the Greek name Atlas, whose insolence sentenced him to a lifetime of supporting the heavens on his shoulders. (Graves 48) Athlene's association with Atlas symbolizes her masculine

strength. The adjective *groß* implies masculinity, and is a physical representation of her dominating personality. The text's preference for a foreign evil stepmother indicates a degree of nationalism. Athlene has two unmarried daughters whom she brings with her into the house. The text does not describe them at this time, but relies on the reader's knowledge of fairytale motifs to characterize them as the "evil stepsisters". On their way to Rabenbühl, Liebetreu retrieves Agnes from the convent and brings her home to live with him and his new stepfamily.

Agnes is described for the first time at this point in the narrative. She is a "*schöne erwachsene Jungfrau*" with "*langen blonden Locken*" (12). In her book From the Beast to the Blonde, Maria Warner examines the symbolic meaning of hair in fairytales. In general, a woman's hair is frequently used as a symbol of her sexuality and erotic attraction (Warner 367). Blonde hair has the added association with feminine goodness and virginity (365-366). Blonde heroines abound in fairytales, and are frequently juxtaposed with dark or red haired villains (366, 377). Agnes' association with good and pure forces is further strengthened by her name itself, derived from the Latin word *agnus* meaning lamb. By describing Agnes as a "*Jungfrau*" with "*langen blonden Locken*" the text is suggesting her inherent goodness and virginity. At the same time, her "*lange blonde Locken*" indicate attractiveness and sexual appeal.

It is at this point that the first fairytale motifs enter the text. The text presupposes the reader's familiarity with the fairytale structure. The reader is required to use these motifs as a tool for constructing the missing information in the narrative. For example, the introduction of stepmother and stepsisters is a powerful symbol in fairytales. These characters are frequently malicious, and their presence generally indicates the arrival of a

dark time for the heroine. This pattern is visible in all variations of the Cinderella story (Thompson Index<sup>3</sup> 501A). The evil stepmother is a malicious force in other tales including "Snow White", "The Juniper Tree", and "Hansel and Gretel", just to name a few. Although the text does not indicate a malicious side to Althene at this point, the reader's familiarity with this fairytale motif predicts difficulty for the heroine.

Athlene is beautiful as well as spoiled and materialistic. Although Liebetreu is overcome with love for his wife, Athlene is more interested in using his financial resources to improve her lifestyle and secure wealthy husbands for her daughters. "*Frau Athlena liebte Pracht und geräuschvolle Freunden; - ihr Gatte lebte nur in ihr und glaubte nur seine Befehle befolgt, wenn ihr schöner Mund befahl...*" (13). She uses the pretense of love to exercise complete control over her husband. The ease with which Athlene manipulates her husband is an indication of his romantic nature. The text criticizes this, and cites it as the source of his weakness. He is ruled by a blind love for Athlene, and this passion prevents him from exerting control over his house and possessions.

The parental dichotomy: weak father vs. strong stepmother, is a common motif in women's fairytales as well as traditional tales. "Cinderella", "Hansel and Gretel", "Snow White", "Beauty and the Beast" are just a few of the many traditional fairytales that depict weak fathers and/or powerful mothers. Jarvis notes the consistency with which passive fathers are presented as negative forces in female fairytales, a characteristic which is not found in traditional fairytales (Jarvis & Blackwell 366). Passive or powerless fathers, although well meaning, are frequently depicted in women's tales as the

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<sup>3</sup> The Stith Thompson Index classifies fairytales based on motifs. Each motif has an entry identifying all known variations, and listing titles for individual fairytales, which contain the motif.

source of their daughter's problems (Jarvis and Blackwell 366). They do not adequately protect their daughters from hostile forces, and frequently place them in dangerous situations. Liebetreu is so overcome with love for Athlene that he is unable to protect the family's financial resources. Athlene's extravagance leads to Liebetreu's financial ruin. He leaves his wife and children one day, and sets off for Italy in an attempt to obtain funds from wealthy relatives. Numerous variations of "Beauty and the Beast" include a father who leaves for a distant land with the goal of securing finances for his family (Griswold). By alluding to yet another fairytale motif, the text heightens the reader's genre expectations. Before departing, Liebetreu leaves a letter instructing Athlene to find a husband for Agnes, and to treat her well while he is gone. He forbids Althene to spend Agnes' dowry (18). He acknowledges Athlene's dislike of Agnes "*meine Agnes liebst du nicht*" (17) yet insists that she stay in the Burg "*Agnes bleibt bei dir auf Waldschütz*" (18) rather than return to the convent.

Liebetreu's letter confines Agnes to the Burg. Although intended for her protection, this confinement is the source of Agnes' misery. This motif is at the core of feminine gothic literature. The eighteenth century conception of the domestic sphere was a realm established for the protection of family members, primarily women (Ellis xi, 37). In her book The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology Ellis argues the domestic spheres, created for the protection of women, were frequently the location of violence and abuse (x). Gothic literature portrays this phenomenon through its preoccupation with the motif of the "failed home" (xi). The goal of feminine gothic literature is to reveal the dangers associated with the domestic realm. The dangerous elements are removed, thereby reclaiming the domestic sphere for women

(xi). These domestic spheres are identified and represented in a variety of ways in feminine gothic literature. For the purposes of this interpretation, any non-public realm to which a woman is confined will be considered a domestic sphere. In Graumännchen, the well-meaning father confines Agnes to a domestic sphere under the care of a "masculine" powerful mother with the hopes that it will keep her safe. In reality, he is imprisoning her in what will become a dangerous realm of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The domestic situation in the narrative draws upon a familiar motif of Cinderella Tales (No. 510 and 510 A in the Thompson Index). These motif types depict the persecution of the heroine by a stepmother and stepsister. In some versions the emergence of an evil stepmother occurs during the absence (either physical or emotional) of the father. This pattern holds true in Graumännchen. Overcome by jealousy for her stepdaughter's beauty, as well as a desire for her sizable dowry, Athlene treats Agnes cruelly. Athlene believes that Agnes' beauty is discouraging suitors from marrying her own biological daughters. As a result, she makes several attempts to decrease Agnes' feminine charm assuming that it will make her undesirable to men. She begins by taking away Agnes' finery and forcing her to wear simple clothing. This proves useless and suitors continue to flock to Agnes' doorstep. The attraction of the suitors to Agnes despite simple attire reveals the bourgeois morality that is present throughout the text. Once stripped of her finery, Agnes is presented as a *Naturkind*, dressed in an "einfachweißen Kleide" and decorated with "einen Blumenkranz im goldenen Haar" (23). Her suitors are drawn to her because of her simple appearance and the "natural" femininity that she exudes, the feminine ideal of the eighteenth century.

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At this point in the text there is a shift in narrative perspective and the external narrator becomes an active character. The narrator speaks directly with Agnes:

*Komm her! liebe Agnes! nicht so schüchtern liebe Dulderin! schlag deine sanften Augen auf! meine Leser sollen gleich hören, warum die vollen Thränen die Kosen deines Madonnengesichtchens verwischen, warum die blauen Augen so geschwollen vom vielen Nachtwachen. Sey ruhig! es wird besser werden(....)geh nur hin, arme Einsame! ich höre die Stiefmutter! (21)*

Her ability to call Agnes over and hear the stepmother indicates that the narrator has temporarily stepped into the narrative. The narrator assumes a maternal role in these instances, consoling Agnes ("*Sey ruhig!*") and offering her hope ("*es wird besser werden*"). Although Agnes' actions are not described directly in this passage, they are implied by the comments of the narrator. This passage presents the role of the narrator as a facilitator between the world of the reader and the world of the characters. It also indicates the moral position of the narrator and creates sympathy for the protagonist. In a text intended as a criticism of contemporary society, this type of intervention and narrator commentary strengthens the text's message.

The phrase "*meine Leser sollen gleich hören*" adds another element to the narrative structure. Here the reader becomes the topic of conversation between two fictional characters. Whereas the early passage indicated the narrator's knowledge of the reader, this passage implies that the characters too know that they are "being read". The passages draw attention to the act of story telling by acknowledging the reader's role in narration as "audience".

Athlene realizes that her attempts to break Agnes' spirit and discourage suitors have failed. She responds by locking her stepdaughter in a tower. She hopes to convince Agnes, through abuse and confinement, to write Liebetreu and request permission to return to the convent. Since Liebetreu insisted that Agnes remain at Rabenbühl, Agnes cannot leave unless she requests permission herself. If this were to happen, not only would Agnes leave the household, but her dowry would be at the disposal of Athlene and her biological daughters.

The evil Athlene is, in part, a reflection of contemporary societal truths regarding the place of stepmothers in the family. Scholars examining the role of stepmothers in fairytales argue that their evil nature was in part a reaction to the threat that biological children posed to the security of the stepfamily. (Weber-Kellermann 36) As Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann notes in her essay "Die Stiefmutter im Märchen", the law provided no protection for stepchildren in a marriage (36). The husband's biological children were the legal heirs and therefore jeopardized the status and security of the stepchildren (36). As a result, fairytales often feature an attempt made by the stepmother to dispose of these biological children (36). The stepmother's resentment towards her stepchildren is articulated in many fairytales including "Brüderchen und Schwesterchen", "Aschenputtel", and "das Märchen vom Machandelboom" (32). Although Weber-Kellermann uses caution when applying social context to literary texts, she does interpret the role of evil stepmother as a reflection of societal conditions (33). While other fairytales allow the reader to speculate the motive behind the stepmother's villainy, Graumännchen makes the financial aspect clear. Athlene's daughters lack the financial security of a dowry, and she is therefore envious of Agnes' financial situation. This

creates a more realistic context, and as a result makes the characters themselves more realistic.

Although it is common among traditional fairytales to make stepmothers appear as villains, women's fairytales generally avoid this negative characterization. In the afterward to The Queen's Mirror, Jarvis writes: "Rather than evil (step)mothers abandoning children or sending them off to certain doom, mothers and other family members in these (women's) tales typically strive to preserve or restore family"(Jarvis & Blackwell 365). Women who are portrayed as villains in women's fairytales are "not witches and wise women, but rather the women who embrace the male world(...)"(Jarvis Vanished 205). Royer argues that Athlene is portrayed as a villain in the tale because she has taken the patriarchal social order and made it her own (262). This explains the necessity of describing Athlene as a masculine force. Athlene is not the demonized woman of traditional fairytales, but rather one of the masculine women that terrorize female authored fairytales. The text chastises women who support the male system and blames them more than men for the victimization of their gender.

Athlene's villainous acts continue. She accuses Agnes of witchcraft, and uses that accusation to justify her imprisonment. Royer argues that the accusations of witchcraft represent an abuse of absolute power as well as a criticism of the Catholic Church. She states that this interpretation is strengthened when Agnes demands she be put through the water and fire test in order to prove her innocence (226). However this interpretation fails to address the underlying sexual connotations of the accusations. It is my interpretation that the accusations of witchcraft are a reflection of societal conceptions of female sexuality. Witches are frequently linked with female sexuality in literature.

Agnes is imprisoned in part due to her uncanny ability to attract suitors. This speaks for her inherent femininity and sexual power, something that she does not control but that is present nonetheless. Society is threatened by unchecked female sexuality (Ellis 11), and as a result, Agnes is imprisoned. The reader knows that the accusations of witchcraft are false. The absurdity of the accusations suggests that the text views the fear of feminine sexuality as equally absurd.

The place of Agnes' imprisonment is described as a "*verfallenes Gewölbe*" that Athlene calls the "*Zimmerchen*" (23). The space itself, a dark enclosed ruin, is a re-occurring symbol in feminine gothic writing, and has been interpreted in a variety of ways by scholars. Ellis argues that these spaces are demonized versions of the domestic sphere, created to reveal their inherent danger. Juliann E. Fleenor states that these spaces are a representation of the female sexual body, and therefore frequently represent a return to the womb. Since maternal elements were associated at this time with the domestic sphere, it is not unreasonable that a text should combine both of these elements.

The tower in which Agnes is imprisoned has a dark history. It was the place where heinous acts occurred, and where prisoners were put to death. This part of the castle has strong ties to the Burg's forgotten past, a past that Liebetreu attempted to annihilate. The narrator explains this background information to the reader directly, and Agnes remains unaware of the Burg's past (23). Faced with hunger, boredom, fear, and threats of violence, Agnes consoles herself with thoughts of her love, Justus. Ritter Justus, whose name means justice (Royer 257), is reminiscent of a chivalrous, medieval time. The narrator explains that Agnes saw Justus prior to her imprisonment, and fell in love with him from afar. This love at first sight motif portrays love as an emotion, and

not the effect of rational thought. The type of love Agnes feels for Justus is a passionate, romantic one. It does not rely on an intimate knowledge of the other person, but rather is grounded in intense emotion. After infrequent, and relatively casual contact with Justus, Agnes is obsessed with love for him. While in the tower she cries out "*Justus! wenn ich dich verloren habe, will ich erst Nonne werden*" (34). The intensity with which she loves Justus, and the lack of justification for this love, implies that Agnes feels a passionate romantic love for him, as opposed to a less passionate, *zärtliche Liebe*.

Agnes is consumed by thoughts of him and the possibility of their union remains the only glimmer of hope in her world. The narrator interjects several comments, offering a more realistic view of the situation than Agnes is able to give. The narrator validates Agnes' choice in men by describing him as "*ein schlanker Ritter, schön und gut*" (32), but adds a hint of realism by informing the reader that Agnes' love for Justus is not reciprocated. The narrator tells the reader that "*er (Justus) war zu wenig mit ihr bekannt, um ganz gefesselt zu werden*" (34). Agnes' obsession with Justus is pitied by the narrator. "*Ach' sie liebte ihren Ritter unaussprechlich, und das gute Mädchen dachte vielleicht, Liebe fordert Liebe*" (34). There is an implicit criticism of Agnes' views of love. The word "*vielleicht*" and "*dachte*" indicate that "*liebe*" does not in fact "*fordert Liebe*". Her obsession with him is misplaced. Unbeknownst to Agnes, Justus soon forgets her ("*Agnesens Bild wurde immer blässer in seinem Andenken*" (35) ) and he leaves the Burg to visit his father.

Life in the tower continues to worsen for Agnes. At first she consoles herself with thoughts of her father and Justus. She hopes that one of them will rescue her, and that she will be reunited with Justus. This is a traditional fairytale motif; the damsel in

distress. As conditions in the tower worsen Agnes loses hope and begins to despair. As readers of fairytales, our expectation is that Agnes' love interest will come to her rescue. Contrary to our expectations, the knight not only remains passive, but over time forgets the damsel and leaves the town all together. By establishing a fairytale context, and then refusing to fulfill reader expectations, the author questions the "knight in shining armor" motif. Instead, Albrecht presents a world closer to reality, one in which the heroine cannot rely on the men in her life to rescue her.

The theme of male abandonment is present throughout the text. Agnes' world is inhabited by weak men who repeatedly abandon her in her time of need and leave her at the mercy of malicious forces. First, Agnes is abandoned by her father at the cloister. Secondly, she is abandoned by her father who leaves for Italy, and finally, she is abandoned by her love, who does not save her. This tripling is a characteristic of fairytales. It re-enforces themes throughout the text and contributes to the aesthetics of the fairytale form (Lüthi 46).

Overcome with boredom, Agnes begs her stepmother to give her work. Athlene responds by assigning impossible tasks. With each task Agnes is told that failure to complete it in three days' time will result in punishment. This motif is present in a number of stories, which are defined in the Stith Thompson's index as number 500-The Name of the Helper. These stories, which include such tales as "Titeliture", "Rumpelstilzchen" and "Tom-Tit-Tot", involve several consistent elements (FF 167). In each case an impossible task is assigned to a young woman, a bargain is made with a helper (frequently a supernatural helper), and the helper is overcome by correctly guessing its name (FF 167). The nature of the task, the situation in which the task was

assigned, and the nature of the bargain vary from tale to tale (FF 167). Vladimir Propp identifies the helper as one of 7 *dramatis personae* (72 -73). The action sphere for these *dramatis personae* includes "accomplishment of difficult tasks" (Propp 72). Protagonists often receive help with completing impossible tasks from magical creature and animals. Despite this common occurrence among fairytale literature, this passage of the text bears a remarkable similarity to Grimm No. 55, "Rumpelstilzen". The description of the antagonist, as well as the unique nature of their bargain, draws parallels between these two tales. Several scholars have suggested a connection between these two tales. Although "Name of the Helper" type tales had been circulating in the oral tradition for many years, Scherf states that Albrecht's tale was based on Marie Jeanne L'Héritiers de Villandon's fairytale novel "L'histoire de Ricdin Ricdon" (322).<sup>4</sup> The two tales differ significantly in the nature of the bargain between antagonist and the heroine. Unlike earlier versions of the tale, Graumännchen was the first in which the heroine promises her baby to the antagonist. In earlier versions, the heroine promises herself as payment for the debt (Scherf 322).

Royer further traces the development of Albrecht's tale. She claims that Graumännchen influenced Caroline Stahl's fairytale Der gelbe Zwerg, which in turn was the basis of the Grimm's "Rumpelstilzchen" (257). In the course of my research however, I have found no evidence to substantiate Royer's claim.

Both tales involve the confinement of the young woman and the threat of heinous punishment. In "Rumpelstilzchen" the three tasks each involve spinning straw into gold. The three-time repetition of the task, and gradual increase of the task's difficulty occurs in

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<sup>4</sup> L'histoire de Ricdin Ricdon first appeared in Marie Jeanne L'Héritiers de Villandon's La tour ténébreuse et les jours lumineux (Scherf 321).

many fairytales and is frequently used as a method of building suspense. This is not the pattern we see in Graumännchen, however. Here the tasks are unrelated, and no pattern of increasing difficulty is apparent. The first task involves separating a bucket of water into three different buckets by water type (one bucket for rain water, one for melted snow, and one for creek water) (38). For her second task Agnes must remove the color from butterfly wings and use them to paint. The third task requires her to spin veils out of spider webs. For the fourth task Agnes is told to separate grain from a bucket. Finally, she is ordered to warm an oven without wood (67).

In both tales, spinning is assigned as an impossible task. Over the years scholars have proposed many interpretations of the spinning motif in Rumpelstilzchen. Spinning straw into gold has been interpreted as a sexual act that indicates the heroine's ability in bed (Röhrich 572), an indication of nobility (Röhrich 578), and a pre-marital test of a woman's industriousness (Röhrich 580). Since Agnes' spinning tasks are assigned by her stepmother, and not a potential suitor, any interpretation that equates spinning with sexuality or marriage is not appropriate in our context. In addition, spinning spider webs into veils does not imply nobility. Instead, Graumännchen uses spinning to symbolize onerous household tasks (Bottigheimer 146). In this regard spinning veils is similar to the grain separations task in that they are both sadistic forms of traditional household chores. These impossible versions of domestic tasks represent the warped domestic sphere in which women are imprisoned. They also suggest the exploitation of women in the domestic sphere.

Each of these tasks has a symbolic meaning. The water separation and fire task are symbolic of the water and fire trials used during witch hunts. When first accused of



witchcraft Agnes demands a test to prove her innocence. "*Ich werde der gesamten Ritterschaft meine Unschuld durch Feuer und Wasserprobe kund thun*" (29-30). These tasks re-enforce the earlier motif. Each time a task is assigned, Agnes is overwhelmed by the impossibility of completing it, and makes no attempt to do the work.

After the third task is assigned, Agnes falls asleep and is visited in a dream by a small gray man (Graumännchen). In the dream he guides her through the woods to her beloved Justus. He appears for several nights in her dreams, each time reuniting her with her love (47). In addition, these dreams not only indicate the role Graumännchen will play within the narrative, it also familiarizes Agnes with him (47). When he later materialized in her room she is not afraid of his appearance because of their previous encounters. His ability to enter dreams indicates that he is a magical creature. His association with the woods disassociates him from society and aligns him with the forces of nature. Graumännchen's association with nature has sexual undertones.

After the fourth task is assigned, Agnes reaches the height of her misery. She denounces God, and resigns herself to suicide. She laments her situation "*Warum mir, der Unschuld, Retten und Tod, und der Bosheit Ruhe und Triumph! (...) Selbstmord!*" (45). That night Graumännchen appears in a ray of light and materializes in her room. The juxtaposition of God and Graumännchen defines the latter as force outside of the Christian religion. This strengthens his association with nature and introduces a new element to his character, his association with pre-Christian religion. Graumännchen offers Agnes hope. He explains to Agnes that he comes "*dich (Agnes) vom Selbstmord zu retten, und dir zu sagen, daß ein lieber Jemand sich nach Agnes seynt, und ihr treuer Liebe Thränen weint*" (48).

He assures her of Justus' love, and says he is there to help. He then proceeds to effortlessly complete all of Athlene's tasks. Over the course of several days his nocturnal visits continue. With each visit he completes the impossible tasks. Royer identifies Graumännchen as Agnes' alter ego, an "*Überlebensmechanismus*" that is (initiated) by thoughts of Justus (263). The loss of her love indicates her darkest hour, and is the catalyst for Graumännchen's creation (263). This interpretation overlooks the erotic aspect of Graumännchen. Graumännchen only visits at night, and appears before Agnes in her bedroom. In her dreams he leads her through the woods to Justus. He is closely associated with nature, implying a connection to sexuality. These associations imply a sexual aspect to Graumännchen, and a sexual connection between him and Agnes.

Agnes is initially taken aback by his appearance and describes him as ugly (51). Graumännchen is described as an un-human freak with his "zahnlosen Mund" (69) "langer gelben Ohren" (69) "schwarzen glühenden Augen" (69) and "gelben Fingern" (159). In general, gothic literature makes use of supernatural creatures to displace internal desires and fears. The effect of creatures such as Graumännchen is that the heroine's (and perhaps also the reader's) "deeply and internally familiar" desires and fears appear before them in "seemingly external, repellant and *unfamiliar* forms" (Hogle 6). These desires and fears take on a more specific meaning when feminine gothic literature is examined. Feminine gothic tradition makes use of grotesque creatures (freaks, dwarves, cripples, etc) to symbolize a specific type of fear; namely the discomfort women feel with their sexual bodies (Fleenor 244). Fleenor examines the way in which gothic villains are used by female authors to displace the heroine's own sexuality (244). Once the heroine's sexuality has been displaced on the deformed creature, the heroine can

externalize the discomfort she feels with her sexuality. The ambivalent feelings Agnes exhibits are caused by acceptance of and subsequent rejection of her sexuality.

Although Graumännchen's visits initially fill Agnes with joy, as the narrative progresses her feelings toward him become increasingly ambivalent. This ambivalence reflects Agnes' uncertainty and discomfort with her sexuality. If we examine Agnes' interaction with Graumännchen, as well as her description of him, we can see a slow acceptance, followed by rejection, of Agnes' sexuality.

After her initial uneasiness, Agnes grows accustomed to Graumännchen's appearance and is no longer frightened (68). She describes him now as "freundlich" (68). She no longer feels alone (67) and instead she fears daybreak because, "mit ihr (Morgenröthe) verschwand Graumännchen" (67). Her comfort with Graumännchen reaches a high point when the text states that Agnes "*Vergaß es fast ganz, daß ihr Gesellschafter kein Wesen ihrer Art war, und wurde (...) furchtlos*" (80). Her inability to identify Graumännchen as a creature different from herself indicates an acceptance of her sexuality. It also marks her regression into the primal, natural world with which Graumännchen is associated. She has stepped out of society, embraced nature and subsequently, her sexuality.

As their relationship grows, however, a day/night duality emerges. During the day, Agnes remembers her "*Pflichten als Mensch und Christin*" (68). She wonders who Graumännchen is, and realizes that he is not a heavenly helper. "*Graumännchen schlang sich nie in eine Gruppe der Engel in ihren Phantasien*" (69). The text suggests that Agnes is closer to Graumännchen than her religion allows; "*Können wir es ihr verdenken, daß sie sich vielleicht mehr, als sie es nach ihrer Religion sollte, an dieses Wesen anschloß?*"

(68). She recognizes him as an un-Christian force, and realizes the need to end the relationship. "*Auch dieses wurde zu seiner Schuld gelegt, und beim Erwachen der Vorsatz gefaßt, mit ihm zu brechen*" (69). Her resolve diminishes in the evening however; and she finds herself "*nicht mehr so stark als der Morgen*" (69). Agnes' nightly "weakness" and morning-after guilt symbolize a sexual aspect to their relationship. Graumännchen's association with night and Agnes' bedroom have erotic overtones. This connection is purely symbolic, and the text offers no indication that the visits were sexual in any physical (material) sense. Instead, Agnes' own sexuality is displaced on the supernatural character.

At first Graumännchen helps Agnes in the spirit of friendship. He brings her food and drink, and continues to perform the tasks that Athlene requires of her. One evening Agnes asks Graumännchen to tell her the history of the Burg. He reluctantly agrees, but announces that this is the last free favor and that he will, "*thue nichts mehr ohne Lohn!*" (82). At this point the narrative perspective shifts, and Graumännchen proceeds to tell his story.

The story of Graumännchen is an embedded narrative text, framed by Agnes' story. A frame story is defined by Bal as a narrative text "in which at the second or third level a complete story is told"(52). Bal identifies a number of possible relationships between the frame and embedded narratives. The embedded narrative can replace the frame narrative so that the reader eventually forgets the frame narrative (Bal 53). The embedded narrative can explain or resemble the primary text, or the embedded story can determine the primary text (Bal 53). It is also possible to have embedded narratives which accomplish a combination of these functions (Bal 53). In the case of

Graumännchen, the embedded narrative explains the actions of the frame narrative.

Unlike frame narratives that eventually give way to the embedded narrative, the Graumännchen story sheds light on mysteries contained in the frame narrative that influence the frame narrative.

The embedded narrative is set off from the frame story by a shift both in narrative perspective as well as tense. The beginning of the embedded narrative is indicated with the phrase "*Er (Graumännchen) begann die versprochene Erzählung.*" (84). The narrative perspective shifts from an external narrator to a character-bound narrator, Graumännchen. Graumännchen himself remains the narrator for the entire embedded narrative. The tense shifts from past tense to present and the passage acquires a feeling of direct speech. This change in tense and perspective is once again reminiscent of the oral tradition. Graumännchen is telling a story to both Agnes and the reader, and the use of direct speech strengthens the association with the oral tradition.

Graumännchen begins the story with a description of himself. He is a pagan priest, and one of the original settlers of the lands surrounding the fortress. He describes the slaughter of the original pagan inhabitants by the Christians. The grotesque gothic mood is created with descriptions of piles of unburied corpses "*Leichen häufen sich auf Leichen*" (88). Graumännchen criticizes the "*Despotie, Widerspruch, Bosheit und Unsinn*" exhibited by the Christians (89). This is a blatant criticism of the Catholic Church (Royer 266). Graumännchen explains that he is bound to the Burg by a promise made to a fallen soldier. He agreed to convert one of the Christians to their religion and in doing so, take revenge for the fallen soldier's death. In an act of religious devotion, a pagan woman gives Graumännchen her baby boy. He names the child Ulmo and raises

him to be a great warrior. Graumännchen hopes that vengeance for the pagans will be accomplished through Ulmo. The plan was successful and Ulmo became strong. Fearing that the son might someday conquer his father, " *es gab Augenblicke, wo er selbst gegen mich stark seyn konnte*" (94). He knows that "*Liebe erzeugt Schwäche*" and commands Ulmo to find a wife (94). Love is portrayed here as a weakness. Love weakened Ulmo the same way that it weakened Liebetreu and led to his financial ruin. Ulmo falls in love with a Christian and converts to Christianity. Once under love's control, Ulmo is unable to continue to be the warrior he was. Instead, he renounces his religion. In doing so he loses his identity, and aligns himself with the enemy. This evokes the wrath of Graumännchen. Ulmo's deeds resulted in a debt that was passed along to his descendents.

At the conclusion of embedded narrative the action in the frame narrative occurs rapidly. Through Graumännchen Agnes learns of Justus' intended marriage and Athlene's plan to dispose of her. Driven to despair by starvation and abuse, Agnes turns to Graumännchen for help. Graumännchen agrees to help her for a price. She is afraid that this price may be her immortal soul. So deep is her despair that she cries out "*rette! rette! ich will alles - fordere! - selbst meiner Seele Heil scheint mir jetzt nicht mehr wichtig!*" (117). Graumännchen does not want her soul, however. He says " *gieb mir als Schuldschein eine deiner blonden Locken; auch versprech ich dir nicht eher als Mahne vor dir zu stehen, bis ich dein Glück vollendet, und du selbst ausruft: alle meine Wünsche sind erfüllt!*" (117). Only after Agnes is happy will Graumännchen specify the terms of payment. A clause is added to this debt. If Agnes can guess Graumännchen's name, " *so ist deine Schuld bezahlt und das Pfand deiner Verbindlichkeit gebe ich dir unentgeltlich zurück*" (119). Name guessing as payment for a debt is unique to

Thompson No 500 tales, The Name of the Helper. It is this unique nature of the pact which separates it from other helper type stories. The deposit, in the form of a lock of hair, represents a piece of Agnes' self that now belongs to Graumännchen. Owning a piece of someone's hair is frequently used in fairytales to symbolize a deep bond between individuals (Warner 373). For a maiden, the loss of hair carries sexual connotations. Warner explains that "maiden hair can symbolize maidenhead" (374), and the loss of hair symbolizes a loss of virtue. When Agnes gives Graumännchen her piece of hair, she gives in completely to her sexual self. The exchange of hair represents not only the depth of this pact, but also the symbolic loss of her virginity.

Agnes reluctantly agrees to the conditions of the pact. Aided by a magical disguise given to her by Graumännchen, Agnes escapes from her tower. She proceeds to go to the celebration her stepmother is holding in their house. The act of mis-recognition by family members and using magical aids to sneak into festivals undetected can be traced to several versions of Cinderella. The stepmother's inability to recognize her stepdaughter at a ball is a motif that appears in Grimm's "Cinderella". Here too a woman slips into a party, dances with the desired suitor, and returns home without being recognized by her family, all of whom were present. While disguised she meets Justus and informs him that, contrary to popular belief, Agnes is not dead. The disguised Agnes encourages Justus to wait a few days' time until he will once again be united with his love. Agnes returns to the tower without being discovered.

Within several days of the celebration, Liebetreu returns home. Together he and Justus attack the Burg, driving out Athlene and her two daughters. There is no indication that the antagonists are punished. The triumph of good over evil is symbolized in

fairytale by the protagonist's reward, and the antagonist's punishment. Albrecht offers a more realistic look at life than traditional fairytales. Hers is a world in which individuals are not always punished for their transgressions, and people rarely get the satisfaction of witnessing the antagonist's punishment. After days of fighting, Liebetreu storms through the tower door and embraces an anxiously awaiting Agnes. Justus follows Liebetreu.

The rescue is followed by Agnes' marriage to Justus. The marriage is described with typical fairytale elation; "*nie ward ein Mädchen, nie ward ein Jüngling glücklicher, als Justus und Agnes, als der Priester ihre Hände schloß*" (141). The text continues with the following description:

*Der schönste Abend verdrängte den schönen Tag. Der schönste Abend führte die endliche Mitternacht herbei, sie fand die Liebenden im verschwiegenen Brautgemach. Es ist uns nichts mehr zu sagen erlaubt, als, Agnes lispelte mit himmlischem Entzücken: ach! ich bin ganz glücklich.* (141)

There is an element of eroticism in this passage. The reader can assume that the events after the wedding, which the authors is not "allowed" to discuss, are sexual. After consummating their marriage, Agnes utters the phrase "*ich bin ganz glücklich*". The association of happiness with the wedding night has definite erotic implications.

After uttering the words "*ich bin ganz glücklich*", Graumännchen appears in the room and places Justus in a deep sleep. Agnes is terrified of Graumännchen. With every step towards her he appears larger, and his gaze is terrifying. (142). Agnes lies "in eiskalter Angst" (142). This is very different from the friendly, helpful Graumännchen described earlier in the text. He informs Agnes that she is pregnant and that her child is



the sum of the debt. Her pregnancy is another reference to sexuality. He promises to return in nine months to collect the child unless Agnes can guess his name.

Agnes' marital unhappiness is explained in the text as the result of Graumännchen's demand for her child this is symbolic of a deeper conflict. The threat that Graumännchen poses is not to the safety of Agnes' child, as the narrative would suggest, but rather the threat that unchecked female sexuality poses to the institution of marriage as a whole. Sexuality, represented in gothic tradition with Graumännchen, was the force necessary to secure a husband and produce a child. However, within the context of eighteenth century conception of marriage, female sexuality poses a threat to both the concept of *zärtliche Liebe* (which dissociates sexuality from love) and the ideal domestic sphere (which requires an a-sexual mother figure to maintain its stability). Realizing that the sexual aspect of her self will no longer be compatible with her role of wife and mother, Agnes views this force as threatening.

Agnes' conflict with Graumännchen causes misery within her marriage. She becomes recluse and her health begins to deteriorate. The text states:

*(...) Freude wurde ihrem Herzen fremd, Freude beleidigte in kurzem ihr thryänenschweres Auge. Der Schlaf floh ihr Lager, die Gesundheit ihre Wange.*

*Die schöne blühende Agnes war bald ein bleiches rastloses Gespenst. (146)*

Her misery calls into question the utopian nature of marriage, and therefore critiques contemporary notions of marriage. The Rumpelstilzchen motif lends itself well as a vehicle for a critique of marriage because it is one of the few fairytales that does not end with marriage, but explores in an indirect way the problems of life after marriage. After the wedding, the text does not describe Agnes' married life as either happy or fulfilling.

She has little interaction with her husband, and is devastated by the conflict between herself and Graumännchen. There is a complete lack of positive "fairytale-like" superlatives, and instead Agnes' misery is described at length. The text's negative depiction of marriage produces a heavy criticism of contemporary societal views of marriage.

After several months have passed in this fashion, Agnes finally begins a search for Graumännchen's name. She invites older members of the community to her house, and asks them to tell her the local folk stories and legends. She hopes that one of these stories contains the answer to Graumännchen's riddle. Few story tellers can be found however, and none of them know the old legends.

As the end of her pregnancy approaches, Justus returns home from a hunting trip and retells a strange event he had witnessed while in the woods. He describes a strange congregation of "Wesen" that he identifies "*eine seltsame fürchterliche Mischung von Thieren, Menschen und Geistern*" (159). He recites the song he heard them sing, and embedded in the lyrics is the name of Graumännchen. "*Liebchen! Wipp dich - leise! leise! Das ich's kleine Dütteldüßgen heiße*" (163).

In his essay "Rumpelstilzchen" Lutz Röhrich summarizes several interpretations of the name-guessing challenge. Some interpretations argue that the title character was a social outcast, hoping to marry the women he helped. If his name were revealed, it would indicate his position outside society and make a marriage impossible (568). Others argue that the naming of the creature represents the heroine's personal development and identity as an individual (576). Still other interpretations suggest that the name motif is linked to a folk belief that knowing someone's name gave power to the

individual (582). Finally, some interpretations argue that the creature is a devil figure. Just as humans are not allowed to know the name of the devil so is the protagonist not allowed to know the name of her "helper" (594). Selecting the correct name represents the alteration of marital expectations. Once Agnes identifies marital love for what it is and abandons her sexuality, Graumännchen no longer poses a threat. It is my interpretation that the act of solving the riddle is a symbolic acceptance of a less-than-ideal domestic situation. She recognizes the threat that Graumännchen poses to her marriage, and realizes the necessity of dissociating herself from him. "Solving the riddle" represents accepting a de-sexualized existence and making amends with her new role as wife and mother. She has "solved the riddle" of marriage and its incompatibility with romantic love.

Relieved, Agnes' health improves. "*Agnes sang und lachte, machte frohe Anstalten zum nahen Wochenbette*" (164). The days later "*Der Thurmwächter rufte der eilften Stunde, als sie den schönsten Buben als Mutter küßte*" (166).

After the birth of the baby, Agnes is transformed into an a-sexual mother figure. She has discovered Graumännchen's identity, and therefore he no longer poses a threat. This indicates that she has successfully disassociated herself from her sexuality. She prays to the Virgin Mary, something she has not done since she denounced God in the tower, and asks forgiveness. "*Agnes richtete sich im Bette auf, betete zur heiligen Jungfrau, und versprach all ihr Lebelang mit keinem so zweideutigen Wesen, als Graumännchen war, sich wieder einzulassen*" (167). The Virgin Mary has historically been used in literature to represent the ideal woman. As both a virgin, and the mother of Jesus, Mary is a symbol of the ideal, a-sexual mother figure. Christine Kallinger writes:

"As a protector of women and children, Mother Mary symbolizes virginity, purity, charity, female humility, submissiveness, and tenderness" (334). Aligning herself with the Virgin Mary and promising never to associate with "*so zweideutigen Wesen*" indicates her rejection of sexuality, and acceptance of her role as a-sexual mother. These two actions are sufficient to release Agnes' from Graumännchen's power. The deposit, a piece of Agnes' hair, appears on a table, indicating the payment of her debt. The return of the hair indicates a return of her sexual innocence.

The ending in Graumännchen is anti-climatic, when compared to its literary relative "Rumpelstilzchen". Unlike the Grimm version of this tale, there is no final duel between good and evil. It is uncertain what happens to Graumännchen, but there is no indication that he is punished in any way. The lack of punishment has an unsettling effect within the fairytale context. Although the text describes Agnes' happiness, "*freudigen Schreck*" (169), it lacks the traditional closing which ensures continued happiness. The text uses the expectation of the excessive happy ending generally found in fairytales to draw attention to the reality of Agnes' situation. Hers is not the utopian world of fairytale bliss, but rather a more realistic world in which difficulties of married life and motherhood lie in her future.

## CONCLUSION

Graumännchen by Sophie Albrecht delivers a criticism of contemporary ideals of domesticity and marriage. The text leaves basic fairytale elements including the punishment/reward motif, the knight as rescuer motif and the happy ending expectation unfulfilled, and in doing so presents the realities of eighteenth century society instead of idyllic expectations. Its use of those motifs found in "The Name of the Helper" type tales are especially effective. This fairytale type, with its depiction of a post-wedding conflict is used as an effective tool for questioning the assumption of marital bliss. "The Name of the Helper" type conflict, found in Graumännchen is used symbolically to depict the inherent incompatibility of marriage and sexuality, and the turmoil that this contradiction causes in the lives of women.

The text's use of gothic elements strengthens the depiction of female victimization at the hands of society. Embedded in the symbolic language of gothic literature, the text depicts Agnes' prison as a demonic sphere, controlled by masculine forces and established for the exploitation of women. In doing so, it questions prevailing notions of domesticity, and attempts to reveal the dangers that were hidden from public view. Gothic elements are also used to portray another aspect of female hardship, namely the suppression of female sexuality. The text uses the gothic character Graumännchen to displace the protagonist's own sexuality. This enables the heroine's conflicted feelings towards sexuality to be expressed as a conflict between herself and a demonic villain. This type of gothic displacement provides a tool with which the text can address issues of feminine sexuality, a topic that did not have a place in mainstream discourse.

In the end, Graumännchen offers no "happy ending" for women. It does not reward those who adhere to social norms, nor does it offer a utopian feminine alternative. Instead, it aims to reveal the inherent contradictions and dangers of the prevailing system, and in doing so vocalizes the frustration and loss that women face in a society that confines them to a-sexual, domestic roles.

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