

**Smallpox, Interiority and the  
Emergence of the Modern European Autobiography**

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Germanic Studies  
in the Graduate College of the  
University of Illinois at Chicago, 2016

Chicago, Illinois

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## SUMMARY

My dissertation examines episodes of childhood smallpox illness in the autobiographies of Franz Xaver Bronner, Giacomo Casanova, Katharina II, Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, Goethe and Johanna Schopenhauer. Drawing from Habermas' theory of the public sphere and Friedrich Kittler's theory of *Bildung* as Sozialisationsspiel, my project examines the degree to which autobiographical accounts of childhood smallpox episodes initiate a "constructed" *Bildungsgeschichte*, one that disguises the process of socialization through a narrative of self-fulfillment (Kittler); conversely, my project also explores the degree to which such smallpox episodes present the author's initiation into adulthood as a moment of growth that is independent of *Bildung*. As an inner bodily experience, smallpox equates a subjective inner transformation of the autobiographical subject; smallpox invokes interiority as a modern construction of the body (Butler) and expresses subjective experiences of the modern self, both within the autobiographical *Bildungsgeschichte* as a constructed narrative of socialization (traditionally associated with the *Bildungsroman*) and within the autobiographies that do not express a linear *Bildungsgeschichte* (such as the more episodic memoirs of Casanova and Wilhelmine von Bayreuth).

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Statement of Problem

Within the scope of the evolving “modern” literary subject of the mid-eighteenth century, the modern self finds expression in a variety of autobiographical forms. In my dissertation, I attempt to gain insight into the ways in which divergent autobiographical forms of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century correspond to experiences of modern individuality. In particular, my project examines autobiographical accounts of childhood smallpox illness. Autobiographies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century frequently include an account of childhood smallpox illness; these accounts often represent a pivotal moment in the narrator’s inner life, and also deepen the themes regarding his or her personal life story. As a disease that infects the individual’s body and allows him or her to undergo a highly personal inner process of sickness, smallpox becomes an economical metaphor through which the modern autobiography expresses a singular and important experience of heightened subjectivity. This singular experience often contributes to the author’s *Bildungsgeschichte*.

The autobiography of *Bildung* and the static political memoir reveal two disparate forms of modern autobiographical production that existed within the same time frame: while the former reveals modern subjectivity to be embedded within the narrative structure of the autobiography, the latter sums up the narrator’s personal emotional outpourings in passing, as emotional events that she relates within a record of daily life. In the autobiography of *Bildung*, the story of the

autobiographer's individual development is constructed as a narrative of self-fulfillment. The *Bildungsgeschichte* reveals a narrative arc that appears to be predetermined from the book's beginning, as the author presents his life as a course of development that logically leads to the formation of his current self. Drawing on the narrative structure of the *Bildungsroman*, autobiographies of *Bildung* present the development of the individual self as the driving narrative force of one's life story: the *Bildungsgeschichte* expresses the narrator's life as a "set pattern" of unique development ("eine gesetzmäßige Entwicklung") in which he undergoes "dissonance" and "conflict" on his life journey; the narrative arc of the narrator's life journey ends with the complete formation of his individual identity, as he achieves "maturity" (*Reife*) and inner "harmony" (*Harmonie*) (Dilthey 327 - 329). In the autobiography of Franz Xaver Bronner, for example, the author's childhood smallpox illness allows him to undergo an inner reflective process through which he begins his transformation into an idyllic poet, the identity that he fully assumes at the end of his autobiography.

In contrast to autobiographies that reveal a *Bildungsgeschichte*, other autobiographies of this period present a more traditional static narrative "I" that mostly observes external circumstances. The memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, for example, eschews a narrative arc of self-development, and instead reveals a narrator who acts as a historical witness to political events. Wilhelmine's memoir strikes the reader as a record of daily life as she summarizes the external events of her life: in the static narrative voice associated with the memoir, Wilhelmine simply narrates her life "from a particular moment in time," as opposed to building a

“story” of unique individual development through a “dynamic” relationship between self and world (Pascal 3 – 10). Despite Wilhelmine’s observational narrative tone, however, her memoir reveals itself to be modern through its expression of emotionality. As she tragically laments her life’s circumstances as a princess who is forced into an arranged marriage for political reasons, she assumes a narrative tone that emphasizes her personal and private emotional experiences over her role as objective historical witness.

While Bronner’s smallpox episode is integrated into the deeper narrative structure of his *Bildungsgeschichte*, the smallpox episode of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth presents a moment in which a modern experience of inner reflection interrupts the static narrative of the memoir: Wilhelmine’s smallpox illness, as an inner experience of the body, allows her to undergo a prolonged moment of inner reflection that would otherwise not be possible in her static narrative voice. This difference in the metaphoric function of smallpox reveals divergent ways in which modern subjectivity can be expressed in the modern autobiography: a childhood smallpox episode can constitute the initial moment of a narrative of individual growth in the *Bildungsgeschichte*, as a particularly modern literary construct that evolved during the eighteenth century; conversely, smallpox episodes can also appear within autobiographical forms that *preceded* the emergence of the *Bildungsgeschichte*, and imbue these forms with a heightened degree of subjectivity from without the deeper narrative structure.

My project views smallpox as a point of connection between various forms autobiography—the “autobiography of *Bildung*,” the “political” memoir, the “role-



player” memoir, and the “self-reflexive” autobiography—through which these various forms can be explored. While the differences between the *Bildungsgeschichte* and the static memoir provide a basic point of analysis for my project, the autobiographies I examine reveal much formalistic nuance (the autobiography of Katharina II, for example, is both an observational memoir of courtly life as well as a modern *Bildungsgeschichte*). My project primarily investigates autobiographies of German authors, in order to situate German autobiography within the larger literary developments of the mid-eighteenth century that occurred throughout Europe and the Western world. Specifically, my project analyses childhood smallpox episodes in Franz Xaver Bronner’s *Ein Mönchsleben aus der empfindsamen Zeit* (first published 1795-97), the memoir of the Markgräfin (Margravine) Wilhelmine von Bayreuth (first published 1810), Johann Wolfgang Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (first published 1811-33), Johanna Schopenhauer’s *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder* (first published 1839), and the memoir of the German-born Russian Empress Katharina II (first published 1859). My project also analyses the memoir of Giacomo Casanova (first published 1822-28). Although Casanova was not German, his memoir betrays parallels to the expressions of modern literary subjectivity in the German autobiographies. Considering Casanova’s gregariousness within the international intellectual community of the European Enlightenment,<sup>1</sup> his memoir represents “[eine] hervorragende Quelle für die Literaturgeschichte seiner Zeit” (Loos 143). My

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<sup>1</sup> Loos recognizes “something Schiller-like” in Casanova’s stance as a worldly Enlightenment writer of “reason” (*Vernunft*) and in his treatment of contemporary philosophical-religious topics: “er [setzt] sich mit Fragen des religiösen Glaubens und der Haltung zum Leben auseinander, er beobachtet und beurteilt alle Phänomene ohne Vorurteile” (143).

analysis of Casanova's memoir strengthens the connection between the German autobiography and the larger literary developments of the West during the mid-eighteenth century.

### B. Modern Subjectivity and the Modern Autobiography

In the following section, I attempt to link the modern autobiography with larger historical trends of modern subjectivity. The modern autobiography of subjective experience represents a product of the "public sphere." Habermas' *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962) establishes connections between the emergence of modern middle-class society and the proliferation of subject-oriented literary forms. Habermas theorizes that, during the mid-eighteenth century, a new discourse of the private entered middle-class psychology through the evolution of the modern liberal economy in Europe. As a product of these economic changes, the public sphere (*Öffentlichkeit*) comes to embrace all aspects of middle-class life (social and private) while simultaneously obscuring the ruling economic power structures that evolved from the medieval economic system.<sup>2</sup> Within the newly emerged public sphere, personal life experience within the family finds a public outlet in order to define universal human experience: the public and the private are

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<sup>2</sup> Habermas explains that the origins of the public sphere were rooted in the beginnings of capitalist commerce. The early "Finanz- und Handelskapitalismus" of the thirteenth century, arising mainly from the Mediterranean trade channels and the Crusades, laid the foundations for the modern bureaucratic "Steuerstadt" that would define the European political economy of mercantilism near the end of the seventeenth century. Habermas explains that, in tandem with the evolution of the modern state, growing trade markets evolved into "National- und Territorialwirtschaften," in which joint-stock companies were implemented to alleviate risk to larger trade expeditions, while tax systems replaced the traditional loan agreements between "Fürst und Finanzier" (28 – 33).

psychologically melded through a conflation of familial and economic roles in creating a sense of universal humanity among the middle class: “der Status eines Privatmannes kombiniert die Rolle des Warenbesitzers mit der des Familienvaters, die des Eigentümers mit der des ‘Menschen’ schlechthin” (Habermas 43). This newly evolved discursive framework of middle-class universality based on private household and familial experience—existing within the “sphere of intimacy” (*Intimsphäre*) as a facet of the realm of *Öffentlichkeit*—creates a space in which more intimate and inward-looking forms of literature can evolve. Habermas suggests that the letter culture of Sensibility and the epistolary novel represent the “playing field” (*Übungsfeld*) in which the private experiences of the “kleinfamiliale Intimsphäre”—or the “sphere of intimacy of the nuclear family”—are reflected into public discourse (44, 66-67).

Within the context of more intimate literary forms, the modern autobiography begins to emphasize the more personal and private experiences of the author over an objective literary purpose. The memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth reveals this formalistic transition: while Wilhelmine objectively chronicles the political events of the Hohenzollern court in Prussia during the first half of the eighteenth century, she also describes the political activities of her immediate family within the context of the *kleinfamiliale Intimsphäre*. The conflict surrounding her arranged marriage represents a private family drama, while her emotional reactions to this family drama place her inner emotional experiences at the thematic center of her memoir.

The heightened degree of subjectivity in the modern autobiography is also

reflective of Enlightenment thought. In *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947), Horkheimer and Adorno theorize that the Enlightenment subject becomes alienated from nature in its desire to exercise power over it; this alienation results in a limitation of perception. Horkheimer and Adorno suggest that the perception of nature as separate from the self originated in antiquity, a time in which “narrative became didactic” (“der Mythos wollte berichten, nennen, den Ursprung sagen: damit aber darstellen, festhalten, erklären [...] Sie wurden früh aus dem Bericht zur Lehre” [14]). In Homer, claim Horkheimer and Adorno, a representation of the gods according to their allegorical functions (“bei Homer steht Zeus dem Taghimmel vor, Apollon lenkt die Sonne [...]” [14]) already reflects humankind’s awareness of this separation from nature: “Sein zerfällt von nun an in den Logos, der sich mit dem Fortschritt der Philosophie zur Monade, zum bloßen Bezugspunkt zusammenzieht, und in die Masse aller Dinge und Kreaturen draußen” (14). In the era of Enlightenment, this separation between humankind as subject and nature as object represents a power relationship in which humankind controls nature through logical and scientific instruments and principles. This relationship based on measurement and scientific evaluation severely limits the experience of the subjective self through its estrangement from nature: “das Erwachen des Subjekts wird erkaufte durch die Anerkennung der Macht als des Prinzips aller Beziehungen [...] Die Menschen bezahlen die Vermehrung ihrer Macht mit der Entfremdung von dem, worüber sie die Macht ausüben” (15).

Horkheimer and Adorno’s “alienated Enlightenment subject” helps to explain the focus on the individual self in the modern autobiography as a product of the

Enlightenment period. The modern autobiography represents the author's attempt to understand the world according to his or her personal experiences: this attempt reveals the individual self to be the controlling agent over the story of his or her life as a representation of the world. In Casanova's memoir, the alienated Enlightenment subject is especially prevalent: Casanova relates his transformation into a seducer of women and a deceiver of fools. As a subject alienated from the circumstances of his life, Casanova manipulates these circumstances, both within the story as he seduces and deceives, and as a narrator of modern subjectivity who exerts control over the narrative of his life.

### C. Smallpox, Interiority and the Body

In analyzing the modern autobiography within the context of Enlightenment discourse and the public sphere, my dissertation mainly focuses on "interiority" as an expression of modern subjectivity. In the modern autobiography, interiority expresses inner emotional experiences connected to the sphere of intimacy of the public sphere: the public display of one's private emotions are pointedly illustrated as an individual's inner emotional experiences in literature. This public display of one's inner emotions is also linked with the expression of individuality. Günter Saße links expressions of interiority (*Innerlichkeit*) in literature to a confusion of identity paralleling the confusion between public and private during the emergence of the public sphere. Saße sees interiority as the need to articulate one's "consistent identity" ("das durchhaltene Identische") amid the multiple social roles imposed on the modern individual owing to this newfound duality of public and private in social life: "von der äusseren Lebenswirklichkeit pluraler Rollenangebote fällt von daher

der Blick auf das Innere, das nun zum identitätsstiftenden Wesenkern stilisiert wird" (72). For Saße, the combined role of the "Warenbesitzer" and the "Familienvater" creates the need to express a stabilized sense of individual identity that exists within the person; in this way, the new literary subjectivity of the public sphere is connected with the need to articulate individual identity through interiority.

Literary interiority also draws on an epistemological parallel between individuality and inner emotionality that evolved throughout history. In their introduction to *Rethinking Emotion. Interiority and Exteriority in Premodern, Modern and Contemporary Thought* (2014), Campe and Weber describe the eighteenth century as the historical period in which interiority evolved into its modern conceptual form. Despite the fact that inner experience had long been recognized within classical intellectual culture (the Stoics recognized "inner freedom"), it was only in the eighteenth when "the concept of interiority became firmly related to emotionality and thus central to understanding individual existence" (1 -2). Campe and Weber view the eighteenth century as a historical turning point for the "semantics of interiority and for the understanding of emotion," in which inner emotional experience becomes closely identified with the individual self (2). In the modern autobiography, interiority provides a space for an individual's particular emotional experiences; these emotional experiences become highlighted as an aspect of an individual's unique life story.

My dissertation analyzes smallpox illness as a metaphoric expression of interiority and modern subjectivity in the modern autobiography. As an illness that

transpires within the body over a prolonged period of time, smallpox represents an inner subjective process through an allusion to interiority: the bodily illness expresses a singular period of inner reflection that articulates an emotional, and oftentimes transformative experience for the narrator. The presence of the childhood smallpox episode within the autobiographical narrative allows for the public display of a private inner bodily experience of emotional reflection or transformation.

By indicating an inner emotional experience, the smallpox episode also asserts the narrator's individual identity within the context of his or her autobiography: the inner emotional experience expressed through smallpox is thematically linked to his or her life story. Within the *Bildungsgeschichte* of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, for example, Goethe's childhood experience constitutes an inner experience in which he transforms into the self-forming artist, and begins his life of self-conscious and proactive artistic growth. As a literary form that emphasizes the author's individuality, the modern autobiography implements smallpox as a means to express the inner self as a space of identity formation: the thematic link between the author's smallpox experience and his or her unique life story (present in the theme of self-formation in *Dichtung in Wahrheit*, for example) reflects the discourse of "das Innere" as the "identitätsstiftender Wesenkern" of the modern individual.

In the modern autobiography, smallpox illness expresses interiority by claiming the body as a metaphoric space of inner experience. The notion that the body acts as a space of interiority in literature can be supported by the assertion

that interiority is constructed upon and within the body: autobiographical smallpox episodes reflect the body as the assigned space of interiority. Judith Butler (*Gender Trouble*, 1990) claims that interiority is constructed through a performance of gender upon the body. Gender is performed through bodily acts that are coded as gender-specific. As these acts are repeated over time, they produce and reinforce the notion of an external gender identity, as well as an interior essence from which this external identity derives: gender performatives maintain the “fantasy” of essential gender-based identity. Interiority, in Butler’s view, is merely “an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse” as well as “the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body”<sup>3</sup> (134-141). Butler provides theoretical support for the analysis of smallpox as a bodily metaphor of interiority in the modern autobiography: autobiographical accounts of childhood smallpox illness reflect the concept of the body as a space of inner selfhood, one from which one’s external identity derives.

Smallpox episodes express interiority in the modern *Western* autobiography: as a literary construction, interiority expresses a characteristically Western form of inner selfhood. The autobiographies analyzed in this dissertation express a consistent narrative voice of inner selfhood projected outwardly. In non-Western autobiographies, this interiorized voice is sometimes abruptly interrupted by moments in which the narrator fails to express private thoughts or experiences;

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<sup>3</sup> Butler attributes gender performativity to the power structures of patriarchy: gender identity derives from “that field of discourse and power” which “orchestrates, delimits and sustains that which quantifies as ‘the human’ [...],” and can be seen most clearly in “the examples of those abjected beings who do not appear properly gendered; it is their very humanness that comes into question” (*Bodies that Matter*, 8).



these abrupt moments cause the narrator to break character, and thereby compromise the work's narrative coherence. In his work *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000), Dipesh Chakrabarty observes that the autobiography of the prominent Indian writer Nirad Chaudhuri does not convey the "endlessly interiorized subject" of Western autobiography, rather it presents certain perceptual gaps—with expressions such as "I do not remember" or "I do not know how"—when broaching private erotic experiences of his wedding night (36). Chakrabarty recognizes a lack of continuous interiority to be common to Indian self-writings ("novels, diaries, letters, and autobiographies") from the nineteenth century on, indicating a general difference between the Indian and European perception of the relationship between public and private in autobiography (35). Chakrabarty's observations of the lack of an "endlessly interiorized subject" in Indian autobiography suggests that the consistent articulation of the interiorized subject in Western autobiography does not derive simply from a laying-bare of private experience, rather this private experience is constructed according to the mandates of autobiographical literary expression. Chakrabarty's observations on Indian autobiography support the notion that the autobiographies analyzed in this dissertation represent specifically Western literary phenomena: smallpox illness aids in the construction of a decidedly Western conception of inner selfhood, while the Western autobiography exclusively requires a consistent representation of the inner self.

#### D. Between the Bildungsgeschichte and the Memoir

The evolution of the public sphere also resulted in Bildung as a discourse of

modern subjectivity and modern individuality; in my dissertation, I analyze the modern autobiography as a Bildungsgeschichte. In doing so, I draw a parallel between the modern autobiography and the Bildungsroman: both forms emphasize the unique life experiences of the autobiographer and the Bildungsroman-hero respectively, and both construct a narrative of self-fulfillment based on the socialization of the middle-class individual. According to Friedrich Kittler (*Dichtung als Sozialisationsspiel*, 1978), the Bildungsroman illustrates processes of initiation into bourgeois society by providing a seamless narrative of the hero's growth. The Bildungsroman creates the illusion of a direct correspondence between personal desire and the fulfillment of social roles: "die Entsprechung von Wünschen und Sozialrollen macht es notwendig, eine Kontinuität zu erzählen, die alle Einschnitte zwischen Primär- und Sekundärsozialisation ausmerzt. Deshalb erzeugen die Regeln selber des Bildungsroman eine Vorgeschichte des Helden" (14). The Bildungsroman-hero's childhood initiation into larger society—a moment in which the truth behind societal structures and social identities should become "unmasked"<sup>4</sup>—is obscured by a seamless narrative of self-fulfillment in order to portray the hero's natural life trajectory as harmonious with the wills of middle-

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<sup>4</sup> Kittler cites the example of the Native American Hopis, who indoctrinate youths into adulthood by allowing them entry into the "Katchinabund." Masked as Katchinas, adult members of the tribe appear as "große und schreckliche Gestalten" before Hopi children during times of festivity. When Hopi children reach adulthood, they undergo a process in which the Katchinas become unmasked and they themselves take on the role of playing the Katchinas and terrorizing the children. According to Kittler, this ritualistic moment reveals a similar "obscuring" of the recognition of socialization present in the Bildungsroman, as the newly indoctrinated "Katchinas" continue the cycle without ever revealing the truth (13).

class society<sup>5</sup> (Kittler suggests that this obscuring of the moment of initiation derives from an impulse of middle-class society to cloak its power structures: “zögernd nur kommt mit der Schliessung eines Geschichtsraumes, der bürgerlich heissen mag, ans Licht, dass auch das neuzeitliche Individuum eine Maske war” [14]). In the modern autobiography and the Bildungsroman alike, Bildung represents a coercive construction of the individual’s induction into middle-class adulthood, as well as a seamless narrative of self-fulfillment, or an “Entsprechung von Wünschen und Sozialrollen.”

As a product of the public sphere, the Bildungsgeschichte is closely aligned with interiority as an expression of modern individuality. Through my analysis, I attempt to shed light on the relationship between Bildung and interiority through smallpox illness: the childhood smallpox illness, while expressing individuality through inner selfhood, also initiates a Bildungsgeschichte of individual self-fulfillment in the modern autobiography. Kittler’s notion of initiation is productive in locating smallpox within the autobiographical narrative as a single moment of induction into a life trajectory of self-fulfillment. As a typical childhood experience, smallpox represents a rite of passage that the autobiographical subject undergoes. Through smallpox, this rite of passage is expressed as a highly subjective inner experience within the context of his or her unique life story: the narrator becomes imbued with a renewed sense of selfhood, and begins the life process that ends with the complete transformation into his or her current self—the self who sets out to

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<sup>5</sup> As the definitive Bildungsroman, Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795/96) provides a template for the hero’s narrative of socialization, in which one’s inner “egocentric fantasies” (*egozentrisches Phantasieleben*) give way to the discovery of one’s “realistic” place in society (Borchardt 182-183).

write the life story—thereby marking the end of the “Vorgeschichte des Helden.” In this dissertation, I interpret the memoir of Katharina II and the autobiography of Bronner as *Bildungsgeschichten*, while I assign Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit* a special status, as a self-reflexive autobiography of *Bildung*. In Goethe’s autobiography of self-reflexivity, the childhood smallpox illness expresses an inner elevation of consciousness, a moment in which he becomes self-aware and self-determining. Goethe’s initiation into adulthood is marked by his awareness of his *Bildungsgeschichte* as something that he can manipulate as he deliberately forms himself throughout the course of history.

My dissertation also considers the function of smallpox in autobiographies that, while a product of the modern literary discourse of the public sphere, do not construct a *Bildungsgeschichte*: childhood smallpox episodes also express interiority as an experience of inner selfhood for the more static narrator. In the role-player memoir of Casanova, for example, the author steps into the predetermined social role of the libertine adventurer in early adolescence, and continually plays out this social role throughout the duration of his memoir. Although the episodic structure of Casanova’s memoir stands in opposition with *Bildung* as a developmental narrative of unique individuality, Casanova invokes smallpox as the crescendo of an inner emotional experience in which he transforms into the libertine adventurer: his inner emotional struggle results in his understanding and embracing of deception as a higher plane of truth. Similar to the role-player memoir, the political memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth does not construct a *Bildungsgeschichte* as a narrative of self-fulfillment, although

Wilhelmine's childhood smallpox illness does express a significant moment of inner selfhood. Rather than instantiating an inner transformation, Wilhelmine's smallpox episode allows her to express a prolonged moment of subjective inner reflection, and to more thoroughly articulate sentiments that she can only mention in passing within the static narrative voice of her memoir.

#### E. Smallpox Motifs in the Modern Autobiography

In my analysis of the modern European autobiography, I investigate numerous ways in which smallpox functions as a metaphor of inner selfhood. In its expression of interiority, smallpox illness represents an inner subjective process of reflection: the physical pain of smallpox represents an inner emotional struggle that ultimately results in an elevated state of consciousness, or a newfound knowledge of the self. In the *Bildungsgeschichte*, this newfound self-knowledge results in a transformation of the self, and initiates a narrative of self-fulfillment (Casanova's memoir represents a unique case in which the author experiences a transformation of identity outside the discourse of *Bildung*). Considering smallpox as a transformative experience in the autobiography of *Bildung*, my dissertation investigates illness recovery as a driving force of dynamic self-determination. Looking specifically at *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, I examine Goethe's recovery from childhood smallpox illness as a moment of inner growth that is continually repeated in later illness experiences, both physical and emotional. Goethe's smallpox recovery results in his awareness of illness recovery as an occasion for self-growth that will constantly be repeated throughout his life.

My dissertation also examines the inner subjective smallpox illness in terms

of temporality in both the memoir and the autobiography of *Bildung*. In the works I examine, the author frequently presents his or her smallpox illness through an abbreviated moment of time: Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, for example, writes that for “twenty-four hours” she struggles between “life” and “death” during her smallpox illness (Band I, 108). My dissertation explores the connections between these formulations of temporality and the broader themes of the autobiography, in order to discover how these connections articulate the author’s story of unique individuality.

My dissertation also investigates the relationship between smallpox and the “narrative of conversion” as a literary expression of modern selfhood. First introduced in Augustine’s *Confessions* at the end of the fourth century, the narrative of conversion represents a standard narrative trope for expressing an important inner experience of the modern Western autobiographer. My dissertation draws parallels between the physical inner struggle experienced by Augustine in his conversion and the physical inner struggle of Bronner’s smallpox illness; significantly, both result in an inner transformation of the autobiographer, as Augustine is imbued with God’s mercy, and as Bronner realizes that his life’s goal is to become an idyllic poet. Furthermore, my dissertation attempts to shed light on how the narrative of conversion, through smallpox, operates differently within the *Bildungsgeschichte* and the static memoir: in Bronner’s autobiography of *Bildung*, his smallpox episode presents his “conversion” as the initial moment of the narrative arc of self-fulfillment; conversely, Casanova’s “conversion” experience represents a singular moment of inner growth that initiates a series of arbitrary

episodes that follow; in these episodes, Casanova describes his life through the predetermined social role of the libertine adventurer. In Casanova's memoir, smallpox plays a pivotal role in expressing the highpoint of an inner emotional transformation into the adventurer of his adult life, however this transformation does not initiate a narrative arc of unique individual development as Bronner's autobiography does.

In connection with interiority, I also explore smallpox as an external manifestation of an inner subjective experience. Goethe, for example, describes his recovery from smallpox as a moment in which his smallpox "mask" falls from his face ("es [fiel] mir wie eine Maske vom Gesicht" [44]). Goethe's allusion to a smallpox mask intimates a connection between an inner subjective illness experience and his external self of public life: his inner subjective experience influences the way in which he engages with the world in his *Bildungsgeschichte*. Within the context of the external manifestation of smallpox upon the face, the discourse of female beauty also becomes prevalent. David Shuttleton (*Smallpox and the Literary Imagination*, 2007) observes that eighteenth-century literary representations of the scarred woman express female disempowerment within the context of a "gendered economy of heterosexual desire, patriarchal power and property-relations" (117). In imaginative literature of the eighteenth century, the "young, aspiring, upper-class heiress" is often threatened by smallpox; this threat represented in literature is reflective of the reality of the times: "attractive daughters were more marketable daughters [...] they might also prove an additional economic cachet by serving as trafficable commodities through which a propertied

patriarchy sought to cement economically and politically advantageous dynastic ties”<sup>6</sup> (118). My dissertation investigates the degree to which female beauty, as a patriarchal commodity, informs the themes surrounding the unique life stories of the autobiographers in question. In the memoir of Katharina II, for example, smallpox scarring feminizes her husband, Peter III, and thereby disempowers him: in the story of her rise to power as she becomes the great Russian Empress, Katharina proves she is more powerful than her scarred husband, and therefore more fit to rule Russia.

The discourse of female beauty is also related to Christian virtue: in connection with Casanova’s appropriation of the Augustinian narrative of conversion, I examine smallpox as an expression of virtue through the figure of the scarred woman who has lost her beauty. Shuttleton explains that the figure of the smallpox-scarred woman in eighteenth-century literature alluded to the impermanent façade of physical beauty: “with the figure of faded female beauty serving a universal role as a sobering example of the transience of *all* mortal, worldly beauty, the figure of the disfigured, hence disgraced and discarded woman served as a fearful reminder of such impermanence” (125). Shuttleton observes that this dichotomy between inner virtue and exterior corruptibility led to a “sentimentalized Christian dualism” between the scarred woman’s “unsullied soul” and the “corruptible flesh” within which the soul is “temporarily trapped” (136). Sentimental literature of the eighteenth century presents the smallpox-infected

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<sup>6</sup> Phillip K. Wilson explains that, with the rise of consumerization in the early eighteenth century, beauty became “more of a commodity than in previous centuries,” spawning new products that would protect a woman’s face from smallpox, such as “beautifying creams” to improve smallpox scarring (61).



woman as a virtuous heroine, as seen in the case of Richardson's heroine Pamela (Shuttleton observes that Pamela's smallpox illness draws attention to the fact that her "principle beauties are much deeper than the skin" [123]). In my dissertation, I argue that Casanova invokes virtue through the image of the scarred woman when Bettina, his first lover, suffers a smallpox outbreak. Casanova's invocation of virtue at the moment of this outbreak serves as the highpoint of his "conversion" experience: his renouncement of worldly desire in exchange for a higher plane of truth is expressed through a sentimental gesture of Christian virtue, as he resolves to love the smallpox-scarred Bettina's inner beauty in chastity and in the "purest friendship" (Band I, 52).

My assertion that smallpox functions as a literary motif is supported by the discourse of "pathography," or a form of illness narrative in which the patient's subjective illness experiences betray a metaphoric and symbolic value. Anne Hunsaker Hawkins (*Reconstructing Illness*, 1999) claims that the writer of patient testimonials fills the gap between language and subjective illness experience through a creative appropriation of cultural myths. Hawkins defines pathography as "a form of autobiography or biography that describes personal experiences, of illness, treatment, and sometimes death," and considers the autobiographical act as a "constructive" and "creative" act in which the subject-patient "constructs necessary fictions out of the building blocks of metaphor, image, archetype and myth" (1-18). Hawkins describes the "subjective" illustration of personal illness experiences—which cannot be described at a factual, objective level—as a necessarily creative act. Similar to the patient-subject of pathography, the

autobiographers of my dissertation construct fictions from their childhood smallpox experiences, however within a more literary context (as opposed to a clinical one) these fictions articulate the overarching themes of their personal life story. As a highly subjective experience, childhood smallpox illness encourages creative interpretations that are able to express themes related to one's personal life story.

Similar to Hawkins, Einat Avrahami (*The Invading Body*, 2007) addresses the problem of representing subjective illness experience.<sup>7</sup> Avrahami recognizes the body as a space of a subjective transformative illness experience that cannot be adequately described: in the view that illness experience constitutes “a process of learning that underscores the changed body as source of knowledge,” Avrahami recognizes language’s lack of ability to express a “lived experience” that defies the “normative construction of the body” of the cultural imagination. This inadequacy of language to express the “changed body” reflects an “inadequacy of the available, shared constructs to encompass the range of experiential embodiment” (3-4). In my dissertation, I draw on Avrahami’s theory on the problem of inexpressibility: as an illness that results in a subjective transformative experience through the “changed body,” smallpox also betrays a certain inexpressibility in the modern autobiography. I argue that the smallpox episodes of my dissertation allude to this inexpressibility in order to highlight the narrator’s personal, highly subjective experience of

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<sup>7</sup> Along with Hawkins and Avrahami, Arthur Kleinman and Howard Brody represent two notable authorities on illness narrative. Kleinman (*Illness Narratives*, 1988) posits that illness narratives emphasize connections between “physiological processes” and social relationships and thereby demonstrate that our inner experiences are “recursively linked” with our social experiences (xiii). Similarly, Brody (*Stories of Sickness*, 1987) claims that illness narratives express shared social phenomena, such as religious experience, through personal illness experiences (13).

transformation: the illustrations of smallpox as an inner bodily experience deliberately block this experience from the reader's eye, and allude to the narrator's subjective inner transformation of which the reader is aware, although he or she cannot see it taking place.

#### F. Smallpox Inoculation and Modern Subjectivity

This dissertation also examines literary representations of modern subjectivity within the context of smallpox inoculation. In 1798, vaccination—a procedure that involved the injection of the cowpox virus to bring about smallpox immunity—was introduced in England by Edward Jenner (Fulford and Lee 139). Before vaccination, inoculation was performed through the variolation procedure, which involved the direct transmission of smallpox pus from an infected subject into the body of one being inoculated, in order to bring about a mild case of smallpox and immunity (Frevert 69). As opposed to the safer vaccination procedure involving the exposure to cowpox, variolation involved a “not inconsiderable [risk] of death” for the receiver of a “milder form of genuine smallpox” (Maehle 198 – 200). Variolation was introduced to Europe during the early eighteenth century; Genevieve Miller (*The Adoption of Smallpox Inoculation in England and France*, 1957) attributes this introduction to the “spirit of [scientific] inquiry characteristic of early modern times,” in combination with the widespread fear of smallpox, which made the general populace “highly receptive to any measure which might aid in escaping or reducing [the] drastic effects” of the disease. In an age of increased geographical exploration, the efforts of “educated people [searching] for facts in all directions” resulted in the importation of variolation from various areas of the eastern world: in

the early eighteenth century, the Royal Society of London received reports of inoculation practice in various eastern geographical regions, such as China, Turkey, Georgia, and the Barbary coast of Africa (48 – 53).<sup>8</sup>

The emphasis on the individual in the literary discourse of the public sphere parallels smallpox inoculation as a symbol of progressive Enlightenment Reason and Mündigkeit: smallpox inoculation represented an instrument of modern rationality, through which the modern citizen assumed control over his individual bodily health. Throughout the eighteenth century, variolation, like vaccination after it, was regarded as progressive and advantageous by many within medical and intellectual circles, however many others within such circles criticized it as a scientifically bogus procedure<sup>9</sup> as well as a blasphemous infringement on God's work, as only God could decide who fell ill with or died from smallpox. Variolation and vaccination suffered the same criticisms within the context of popular resistance, namely a belief in the necessity or inevitability of smallpox as an instrument in God's plan, and a fear of

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<sup>8</sup> Despite the popular belief that the wife of the British ambassador Edward Wortley Montagu, Lady Wortely Montagu, was responsible for introducing variolation to England and the Western world around 1721/22, two sons of the previous ambassador to Turkey (Robert Sutton) returned from abroad in 1716 bearing markings of the procedure, while various reports from the English royal society reveal that forms of variolation had been observed in China as early as 1700 (Miller 45 – 51).

<sup>9</sup> In the absence of microbiology, much controversy surrounded variolation as an anomalous medical therapy. The variolation procedure was perceived as a faulty medical therapy, as some doctors believed the direct transmission of smallpox to be just as dangerous as contracting the disease in the natural way, while others believed the "künstliche Blattern" (artificial smallpox) given by variolation to be a different disease altogether from actual smallpox. While such opposition to variolation died out in France and England around 1770, this opposition continued in Germany for the duration of the century (Maehle 198 – 200).

intervening in God's plan by attempting to control one's own destiny<sup>10</sup> ("Glaube an die medizinische Notwendigkeit oder Unumgehrbarkeit der Pocken, ihre göttliche Verursachung etwa als Strafe und damit das Verbot, in das Schicksal einzugreifen" [Wolff 106 – 107]). In tandem with the emergence of Enlightenment Reason and Mündigkeit, both variolation and vaccination were criticized as a blasphemous measure through which the modern individual attempted to control his own destiny. Smallpox inoculation expresses Bildung as a discourse of modern self-determination, in parallel with the narrative of self-fulfillment of the Bildungsroman: the literary Bildungsgeschichte and the sense of self-mastery associated with inoculation derive from the same discourse of the modern empowered individual.

My dissertation examines the function of smallpox inoculation—specifically variolation—in connection with the autobiography of Bildung. As a procedure that was mostly administered to children, inoculation can also indicate an initiation into middle-class adulthood in accordance with the theory of Kittler. Inoculation represents the child's indoctrination into middle-class society as an empowered modern citizen—the act of inoculation symbolizes the modern citizen's assumption of control over his own destiny, and an overcoming of a childhood disease that was

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<sup>10</sup> In the medical Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, doctors attempted to persuade the general populace to favor inoculation over prejudices rooted in religious attitudes. In his book *Gründe für und wider die Pockeninoculation* (1780), Johann August Heinsius reasons that if inoculation is indeed blasphemous for infringing on God's work, then keeping children indoors during smallpox outbreaks would have to be considered just as blasphemous (Heinsius 7-8).

regarded with much fear.<sup>11</sup> The autobiography of Johanna Schopenhauer recounts her childhood variolation procedure within the context of her induction into modern society, however as a means to critique this very induction. Schopenhauer's variolation procedure, rather than endowing her with self-empowerment, stifles her unique individual growth. As a woman, Schopenhauer is blocked from Bildung as a tool of self-fulfillment and male privilege in modern "progressive" patriarchal society: her variolation procedure represents a moment of Enlightenment education in which she becomes blocked from pursuing a life of self-fulfillment.

In my analysis of Schopenhauer, I investigate the ways in which this blocking of personal desire is reflected in a similar blocking of a dynamic Bildungsgeschichte as a narrative structure in her autobiography. I compare Schopenhauer's autobiography to *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, a work that demonstrates the modern individual's consciousness of his life as a narrative of self-fulfillment as he traces it throughout history. As a modern individual, Schopenhauer also presents her autobiography as a testament to her unique individuality; as opposed to Goethe, however, Schopenhauer expresses her uniqueness through her lack of access to a Bildungsgeschichte of personal growth: Schopenhauer's unique identity is represented by a static and unchangeable sense of self, one that remains independent of Bildung as a dynamic narrative of the individual's engagement with the world. Schopenhauer's adverse relationship to smallpox inoculation suggests

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<sup>11</sup> Miller explicates smallpox as a children's disease: "by the [eighteenth] century, so universally prevalent and dreaded was the disease that people considered themselves fortunate if they had contracted a mild case as a child and no longer had to fear its ravages, while parents did not count their children until they had all had it" (31).

that, unlike Goethe, her sense of selfhood remains independent of the historical progress of the enlightened world.

While my dissertation investigates smallpox inoculation as a form of educational discipline that blocks Schopenhauer from Bildung, I also examine smallpox immunity—a symbolic function of inoculation—as a literary motif that grants Katharina II access to Bildung, and thereby transforms her static political memoir into a modern autobiography of Bildung. Johannes Türk (*Die Immunität der Literatur*, 2011) draws a parallel between smallpox immunity and representations of Bildung in literature: the literary Bildungsgeschichte represents a symbolic act of smallpox immunity by expressing one's control over his destiny; furthermore, representations of smallpox immunity *within* the narrative strengthen this connection between Bildung and immunity (112). In the memoir of Katharina II, allusions to smallpox immunity allow her to construct a Bildungsgeschichte of patriarchal privilege: unlike Schopenhauer, her life story is represented by a narrative arc of personal growth, culminating in the transformation of her unique self into Katharina “die Große,” a unique ruler wielding power normally reserved for male monarchs.

My investigation of Katharina's adoption of the Bildungsgeschichte as a patriarchal literary form reflects my general interest in analyzing the modern autobiography within the context of feminist discourse. Katharina's status as a ruler who inhabits a unique position of male power reinforces the notion that the literary Bildungsgeschichte represents a male-oriented conception of unique individuality. By the same token, Schopenhauer's lack of access to a story of Bildung—despite the

fact that her autobiography represents a story of unique individuality—strongly suggests that the autobiography of *Bildung* represents a specifically male conception of life experience. Sigrid Weigel (*Der schielende Blick*, 1983) sheds light on the connection between gender and literature. According to Weigel, the historical representations of women (*Frauenbilder*) in literature of male authors can also be discerned in *Frauenliteratur*, or literature of female authors. Rather than viewing the aesthetic representations of the feminine from the standpoint of a categorical division between male and female writers, Weigel encourages the investigation of patriarchal representations of *Frauenbilder* (“die patriarchalische Ordnung für die ästhetischen Ausdrucksformen des ‘Weiblichen’”) in the literature of men and women alike. Weigel is interested in the degree to which women authors reproduce the patriarchal *Frauenbilder*, as well as the degree to which these authors either conform to these *Frauenbilder* or liberate themselves from them (83).

Weigel’s theory is helpful in analyzing the degree to which the women writers of my dissertation conform to or liberate themselves from the patriarchal power structures connected with literary formalism. Katharina’s adoption of the male *Bildungsgeschichte* reveals an appropriation of *Bildung* as an exclusively male domain, in parallel with her assumption of male power as she assumes the Russian throne. Schopenhauer’s autobiography, on the other hand, reflects her empowerment through a rejection of *Bildung* as a male-dominated literary discourse: the moment in which she is blocked from a life trajectory of self-fulfillment represents the moment in which she identifies her unique self as an independent and unchanging entity. Finally, the autobiography of Wilhelmine von



Bayreuth reveals a more subtle rejection of the patriarchal power structures that control her life: her smallpox illness allows her to express an inner emotional rejection of her parents' attempts to marry her to the Prince of Wales; through this rejection of her parents' desires, Wilhelmine is also rejecting political marriage as a patriarchal power structure.

### G. Breakdown of Chapters

In the first chapter, I compare Bronner's *Ein Mönchsleben aus der empfindsamen Zeit* with Casanova's memoir. In my analysis, I reveal the different ways in which the Augustinian narrative of conversion transmits a narrative of inner growth in Bronner's *Bildungsgeschichte* and in Casanova's episodic role-player memoir. In Bronner's autobiography, the author's smallpox conversion experience is presented as an inner bodily struggle that corresponds with themes of his unique life story. In Casanova's memoir, on the other hand, the narrative of conversion, in combination with smallpox imagery, is expressed as a single inner emotional experience in which the author transforms into his adult self, signaling a singular moment of self-growth in his episodic memoir, a form in which self-growth normally does not occur.

In my analysis of Bronner and Casanova, I hope to show that the narrative of conversion, as an expression of interiority and inner growth of the modern individual, is present in two opposing forms of autobiography—the *Bildungsgeschichte*, as a modern narrative structure of the newly emerged public sphere, and the more traditional episodic memoir, as a form that does not appropriate the new discourse of *Bildung*. I hope to underscore the narrative of

conversion and smallpox imagery alike as innovate agents of modern literary subjectivity: not only do they initiate Bildung as a new literary structure, they also transform the episodic memoir by placing a singular moment of self-growth within it. In Casanova's memoir, the role-player narrator reveals a more empowered stance of the alienated Enlightenment subject following his conversion experience, although Casanova's memoir retains the same episodic structure in the absence of a narrative arc of self-fulfillment.

In the second chapter, I compare the memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth with the memoir of Katharina II. In my analysis, I attempt to reveal the differing ways in which smallpox imagery furnishes the political memoir—an autobiographical form that mainly observes external political circumstances—with a heightened degree of modern subjectivity. Through interiority, the smallpox illness of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth allows her to express an inner reflective experience that emphasizes her memoir as a modern and personal life story rather than a record of courtly and political life. In the memoir of Katharina II, smallpox immunity transforms the author's courtly memoir of upper-class life experience into a Bildungsgeschichte of the middle-class discourse, in which the individual's unique life story of self-fulfillment is stressed. In this chapter, I attempt to show smallpox imagery, as a conveyer of both interiority and the modern individual's empowered immunity, can modernize more traditional forms of memoir.

In the third chapter, I compare Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* with Johanna Schopenhauer's *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder*. In my analysis, I shed light on how Goethe, as a self-reflexive narrator, traces the development of his individual self as a

historical object that undergoes change throughout life, and simultaneously brings about historical progress through a dialectical “life process” (*Lebensprozeß*) of self-cultivation. In my analysis, I reveal how smallpox initiates his dynamic *Bildungsgeschichte* and contributes to the self-reflexive autobiography as a highly subjective literary form, in which the author consciously illustrates his unique growth within the Enlightenment discourse of *Bildung*.

Like Goethe, Schopenhauer is aware of herself as a historical object of *Bildung*, however her childhood inoculation procedure blocks her from fulfilling a life of self-fulfillment, and simultaneously characterizes her autobiography as a testament to unique selfhood that nevertheless stands outside the Enlightenment discourse of *Bildung*. In this chapter, I attempt to show how smallpox imagery illustrates the narrator’s initiation into the world in two very different ways: while Goethe’s childhood smallpox episode initiates his *Bildungsgeschichte* as a story in which an iconic author finds his place in the world, Schopenhauer’s childhood inoculation causes her to articulate her sense of self as separate from the world and the development of history. My analysis of Schopenhauer reveals that smallpox inoculation can also represent a deviation from the self-reflexive *Bildungsgeschichte*.

In analyzing smallpox in the modern autobiography, I implement the method of close reading. Through my close analysis of smallpox imagery, I attempt to grasp the nuances pertaining to the themes of my authors’ particular life story. In analyzing the smallpox episode of Bronner, for example, I reveal the subtle ways in which his inner bodily struggle with sickness intimates his more personal conflicts

with Catholic authority. My close readings of smallpox episodes, in combination with a reading of other salient textual moments, are meant to deepen my reader's understanding of the way in which smallpox imagery expresses inner experiences of modern selfhood. Furthermore, my close readings reveal how these expressions of interiority influence a variety of narrative forms of the modern literary discourse. In attempting to present a more comprehensive analysis of smallpox imagery within the context of modern autobiography, I also apply close readings to other aspects of smallpox symbolism—such temporality, female beauty, and immunity—that contribute to the themes of the individual's life story.

My close readings of smallpox imagery in the modern autobiography are also embedded in contemporary theoretical discussions of modern selfhood. I implement twentieth-century cultural theory in order to explicate literary expressions of modern selfhood: Habermas' *kleinfamiliale Intimsphäre*, for example, allows for the investigation of the political memoir as a modern autobiography of private and intimate experience; while Foucault's designation of the modern "non-sick" citizen allows for an investigation of the parallels between smallpox inoculation and the modern self of the Enlightenment discourse. Furthermore, I embed my close readings within the historical contexts of the Enlightenment period, such as the popular resistance to smallpox inoculation and the misogynistic conceptions of Enlightenment education demonstrated by the work of Kant. Along with Kant, I draw on other thinkers of the Enlightenment period—such as Lessing and Hegel—that were contemporaneous to the autobiographies I analyze; by invoking Enlightenment thinkers, I embed my close readings within the intellectual context of

the outgoing eighteenth century, in which philosophical reflections on Bildung and Mündigkeit shaped the discourse of the modern individual and influenced the autobiographies in question. Lastly, I consider the autobiographical genre itself from the standpoint of its own historical evolution: by examining smallpox imagery in combination with the Augustinian narrative of conversion—the initiating historical moment of the modern autobiography—I consider the different ways in which the conversion narrative expresses the inner development of the modern individual.

## II. SMALLPOX AND THE NARRATIVE OF CONVERSION: GIACOMO CASANOVA AND FRANZ XAVER BRONNER

### A. The Narrative of Conversion, the Autobiography of Bildung and the Role-Player Memoir

In this chapter, I explore connections between smallpox and the Augustinian narrative of conversion as an expression of an inner subjective transformation. In my analysis, I assert that smallpox plays a key role in expressing the autobiographer's childhood conversion as a transformative experience, in which the author assumes his adult identity. Through my investigation, I attempt to gain further insight into the similarities and differences between divergent forms of modern autobiography, namely the *Bildungsgeschichte* (Bronner), as a narrative arc of unique self-development, and the episodic role-player memoir (Casanova), in which the autobiographer falls into a predetermined social role and reinforces this role in a procession of episodes.

The narrative of conversion, as a literary trope that expresses inner experiences of modern selfhood, reveals different ways in which the modern self transforms in the *Bildungsgeschichte* and the role-player memoir. Bronner's *Ein Mönchsleben* presents his childhood conversion in connection with the particular themes of his unique story of individual development, namely his rejection of and emancipation from his life as a Benedictine monk in order to become a writer of idylls: his childhood conversion represents a moment of intellectual awakening as he rejects the Benedictine order, and begins his journey of self-emancipation as he

flees his monastery in Donauwörth (Bavaria) and travels to Zurich to write idyllic poetry. Bronner's childhood conversion experience is integrated into his *Bildungsgeschichte* through a correspondence with the themes of rejection and emancipation that make his life story unique to himself; furthermore, as the initiating moment of his "Vorgeschichte des Helden" (Kittler) that ends with his arrival in Zurich, his conversion experience constitutes a part of the deeper structure of his *Bildungsgeschichte* as a constructed narrative of self-fulfillment.

While the narrative of conversion constitutes a part of the deeper structure of Bronner's narrative arc of self-growth, Casanova's memoir appropriates Augustine's conversion as an inner emotional process that is encapsulated in a singular episode of inner transformation. Casanova's inner emotional transformation into libertine adventurer bears a resemblance to the emotional stages through which Augustine, in the final stage, renounces his worldly desires and embraces God's mercy. In contrast to Augustine's pious renouncement of worldly—mostly carnal—desire, Casanova's conversion leads to his renouncement of his conventional feelings of scorn and jealousy in connection with amorous affairs, as well as his desires to possess women as lovers, as he transforms into a liberated seducer and deceiver of superior intelligence.

Casanova's conversion represents a singular moment of self-growth, as it leads to his transformation into a libertine adventurer; after this transformation takes place, however, Casanova's life story unfolds as a series of episodes in which he repeatedly reconfirms his identity of libertine adventurer through his seductions and deceptions. Since these episodes do not comprise a narrative arc of unique

development, as Bronner's autobiography does, Casanova's episode of inner transformation stands out as a singular subjective experience of inner growth within his role-player memoir. Casanova's transformation is unique to himself, however the identity that he adopts in his transformation represents a predetermined social role, that of the libertine adventurer. The majority of Casanova's memoir serves to fulfill this role, rather than provide a narrative arc of unique individual development.

Bernd Neumann's designation of Casanova's work as "memoir" rather than "autobiography" (*Von Augustinus zu Facebook*, 2013) provides a theoretical point of departure in recognizing its episodic narrative structure. According to Neumann's formulation, "der Memoirenschreiber vernachlässigt also generell die Geschichte seiner Individualität zugunsten der seiner Zeit. Nicht sein Werden und Erleben stellt er dar, sondern sein Handeln als sozialer Rollenträger und die Einschätzung, die dies durch die anderen erfährt" (Neumann 22). In order to portray personal experience in service of social interest, the individual disappears beneath the role-player in the memoir.<sup>12</sup> Although Casanova's memoir highlights the life experiences of the individual self, these experiences ultimately emphasize the role-player of the libertine<sup>13</sup> adventurer, as he seduces women, rubs shoulders with notable

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<sup>12</sup> Similar to Neumann, Wayne Shumaker posits that Casanova's memoir lacks an "inner unity" of the self. While Shumaker recognizes his memoir as an attempt to express the individual self, he contends that Casanova fails to allow the reader to identify with him emotionally: Casanova's memoir is mainly meant to entertain, as it presents "occurrences for their own sake" (93).

<sup>13</sup> The concept of libertinism describes the loose sexual behaviors of aristocratic men (mostly French) that were associated with freethinking during the downfall of the *ancien régime*. Cryle and O'Connell contend that Casanova, among other libertine writers, demonstrates a "culture of risk, defiance and ethical experimentalism" (3 – 4).



intellectual figures (such as Voltaire, whom he meets in Chapter Twenty-One of Book Three), and cleverly extricates himself from legal entanglements owing to his seductions and blasphemous behaviors (In Chapter Twenty-Nine of Book Two, for instance, he is arrested for the possession of demonic books; the ensuing chapters illustrate his daring prison escape). These episodes reinforce Casanova's role of libertine adventurer, rather than provide a story of the author's development. As opposed to Bronner's *Ein Mönchsleben*, Casanova's life story does not conclude with the author's arrival at his ultimate stage of self-development, nor does it present a story of socialization disguised as self-fulfillment: his visage of libertine adventurer is assumed in the first chapter of the book and remains constant throughout.

The formalistic differences between Casanova's role-player memoir and Bronner's *Bildungsgeschichte* parallel the different ways in which smallpox functions in conjunction with the childhood conversion of each writer. In Bronner's autobiography, smallpox functions as a bodily metaphor, through which he undergoes sickness as an inner spiritual struggle, and then becomes awakened to his new adult identity as he discovers his inner poetic sensibilities. Bronner's smallpox transformation is connected with the themes surrounding his unique *Bildungsgeschichte*: he first experiences his smallpox illness as a physical rejection of the sacral wine while in church, and later escapes the enclosed space of his sickroom for the healthy idyllic countryside, foreshadowing his eventual escape from his monastery to Zurich.

While smallpox plays a role in the deeper structure of Bronner's *Bildungsgeschichte*, smallpox signifies the highpoint of a singular episode of inner

transformation in Casanova's memoir. In the final stage of his conversion, Casanova undergoes an inner emotional renouncement of his conventional attitudes toward love when he discovers a newfound affection for Bettina, the lover who scorns him, in the midst of her smallpox illness. Casanova's renouncement of scorn and jealousy for Bettina transforms him into the liberated adventurer and initiates his life trajectory of seduction and deception. In conjunction with his experience with Bettina, Casanova's memoir also adopts the smallpox imagery typical of the sentimental novel in order to invoke Christian virtue. Casanova invokes Christian virtue through the image of the scarred sentimental heroine, whose ruined exterior contrasts with the permanence of her inner beauty (Shuttleton 136). Casanova's profound emotional reaction to his discovery of Bettina's inner beauty after she comes down with smallpox articulates the final stage of his inner conversion into libertine adventurer. Ironically, Casanova's renouncement of his conventional attitudes toward love affairs in favor of a life of seduction is signified by his newfound appreciation for chastity in his relationship with Bettina, with whom he now maintains the "purest friendship" (Band I, 52).

In order to justify my analysis of autobiographical smallpox episodes in connection with the narrative of conversion, I would like to provide background on the presence of Augustine's conversion in the modern autobiography. I subscribe to the commonly held position that Augustine's *Confessions* (AD 397 – 98) bears a strong influence on the Western autobiography. Linda Anderson observes that, among critics of autobiography, "Augustine's *Confessions* [is] often thought of as the origin of modern Western autobiography, both in the sense of marking a historical

beginning and of setting up a model for other, later texts" (Anderson 18). In establishing an "inward-turning gaze" deriving from Christian self-examination, *Confessions* is widely considered to be the "historical moment" in which the Western autobiography becomes a distinct genre: *Confessions* represents the "inaugurating moment of autobiography" (Anderson 18 – 19). Exemplifying this commonly held critical stance, Eugene Stelzig (*The Romantic Subject in Autobiography. Rousseau and Goethe*, 2000) sees Augustine's *Confessions* as the "instrumental inward turn" that "initiated [a] genre [including] Rousseau's work of the same title, Goethe's *Poetry and Truth*, [and] Wordsworth's *Prelude*, secularized versions all of the first great Western autobiography" (2 – 4). Similarly, Neumann asserts that the individualistic impulse of Western autobiography began with Augustine's *Confessions*, which established the "Dimension der Innerlichkeit" as a "quasi göttlicher Bereich" from which individual experience could also be articulated (23). Stelzig and Neumann consider the inner self of the modern Western autobiography to be the heritage of Augustine's inward-looking self-examination. While this chapter does not attempt to support the claim that *Confessions* exclusively spawned the evolution of the Western autobiography, it does validate the claim that Augustine's conversion bears a strong influence on autobiography as an inward-looking literary form: the narrative of conversion constitutes a ubiquitous literary trope that can be discerned in the smallpox episodes in *Ein Mönchsleben* and Casanova's *Erinnerungen* as experiences of inner selfhood.

Augustine's *Confessions* also introduces to Western autobiography a narrator who possesses a sense of individuality from which his story of inner growth unfolds;

this literary inheritance is present in the smallpox episodes of conversion in the autobiographies of Bronner and Casanova. Anderson explains that the “inward turn” of *Confessions*, away from a worldly path and back to God, betrays the narrative stance of one whose self-knowledge as the converted subject precedes the illustration of the conversion experience itself:

By turning towards the outside world Augustine believed he was also losing himself, and as a result losing sight of God [...] The outward journey is a false journey, becoming meaningful only in retrospect by being realized as a return: it is a torturous journey back to God. The narrative thus merely defers a resolution which, from another perspective, is already known [...] Augustine’s conversion has to be read as a conversion, in narrative terms, to a point of view from which the future, now become past, can be seen as part of the overall design. (Anderson 20 – 21)

Augustine is already aware that that end result of his “torturous journey back to God” (“Go on, oh Lord [...] stir us up, and call us back” [Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 421]) will be his conversion. Augustine’s embrace of God’s mercy represents an inner transformation that, within the narrative logic of *Confessions*, allows him to uncover his true self as one who lives in God’s graces, rather than discover it: he retains a static individual identity—of one who is already converted—from which the story of his conversion generates.

In alignment with Anderson’s views, Suzanne Nalbantian (*Aesthetic Autobiography*, 1994) asserts that the chronological structure of *Confessions* is

driven by the moment of conversion in Augustine's life, introducing to the Western autobiographical canon a narrative trajectory that follows one's personal life. The book is structured around the crucial moment of conversion: from the outset of *Confessions*, "the narrative self, aged 44, converted and religious, overrides the protagonist self, aged from one to 33, pagan and sinful" (Nalbantian 3 - 4).

Augustine's narrative perspective, while deriving from a devotional appeal to God, assumes the tone of a personal story. Both the autobiographies of Bronner and Casanova draw from the narrative of conversion as a literary form in which the narrator can express his individual identity even before a transformation of the self takes place within the narrative—Casanova, for example, already alludes to the "idiots" and "fools" that he deceives throughout his life in the preface of his memoir (Band I, 3).

In Bronner's *Bildungsgeschichte*, his conversion experience is articulated as a moment of healing that is also an improvement of the self, as he gains a higher level of self-knowledge regarding his affinities to idyllic poetry. In order to strengthen the connection between *Bildung* and Augustine's conversion as a moment of healing in Bronner's work, I draw on Foucault's theory of the "care of the self." According to Foucault, the "cultivation of the self" represents a "very ancient theme in Greek culture" that survives as a central component of the modern understanding of the self (43). The theme of the care of the self was "consecrated" by Socrates in his *Apology*, in which he characterizes the "art of existence" as being "dominated by the principle that says one must 'take care of oneself'" (Foucault 43). Over centuries,

this concept of the care of the self articulated by the Greek tradition<sup>14</sup> becomes “rather general in scope” as it infiltrates modern culture, taking the “form of an attitude” and a “mode of behavior,” becoming “instilled in ways of living,” and evolving into “procedures, practices, and formulas that people reflected on, developed, perfected, and taught.” The care of the self thus plays a central role in defining the cultural value of the modern self, by constituting “a social practice” that “[gives] rise to relationships between individuals, to exchanges and communications, and at times even to institutions” (Foucault 44 - 45). Foucault explains further that the concept of the care of the self has a “close correlation with medical thought and practice” (54), as indicated by the ancient Greek philosophical tradition, in which

A whole series of medical metaphors is regularly employed to designate the operations necessary for the care of the soul: put the scalpel to the wound; open an abscess; amputate; evacuate the superfluities; give medications; prescribe bitter, soothing, or bracing potions. The improvement, the perfecting of the soul that one seeks in philosophy [...] increasingly assumes a medical coloration. (Foucault 55)

Similar to the philosophy of the care of the self, Augustine’s *Confessions* implements medical metaphors to communicate conversion as a process of healing and improving the soul. Augustine describes how God reveals to him his diseased

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<sup>14</sup> Aside from Socrates, Foucault cites Plutarch (*Advice about Keeping Well*) as viewing the care of the self within a medical context; Plutarch claims that “philosophy and medicine are concerned with a single field” (Foucault 54).

state of sinfulness at the beginning of Book Eight, which concludes with the portrayal of his conversion: “[...] and thou now settedst me before mine own face, that I might discern how bespotted [and] ulcerous I was” (Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 439). After Augustine renounces his worldly desires of “aspiring and getting” and manages to “[scratch] off” the “itch of lust,” he describes his newfound “Riches” of the soul in terms of good health. In the beginning of Book Nine, Augustine writes: “now became my soul free from those biting cares [...] And I talked more familiarly now with thee, my Honour, and my Riches, and my Health, my Lord God” (Vol. II, Trans. Watts, 5). Augustine’s conversion represents a healing of the soul that is also an improvement of the self: through a transition from sickness to health, the narrative of conversion reveals a moment of self-maintenance and self-improvement, reflecting a central experience of the modern individual.

Bronner’s smallpox episode describes a moment of physical healing that communicates his conversion into idyllic poet as an inner cultivation of the self; this healing moment also initiates his *Bildungsgeschichte* as a story of self-fulfillment. Bronner’s transition from bodily suffering into physical health during smallpox mirrors Augustine’s healing moment of conversion, as he receives the “healthful affections”<sup>15</sup> of his Savior (Pusey 158). Bronner’s conversion—as a return to inner spiritual health—also parallels the themes of self-emancipation from the Catholic educational institutions of his childhood and young adulthood: Bronner’s childhood

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<sup>15</sup> In this chapter, I work with William Watts’ translation of *Confessions*, originally published in 1631, as well as Edward B. Pusey’s translation in the Random House edition (1999). While Pusey’s translation bears a strong resemblance to that of Watts, slight differences in word choice exist between the two texts. By including both texts, I broaden the scope within which medical terminology can be used to describe Augustine’s conversion.

recovery from smallpox sparks his inner artistic desires and initiates his Bildungsgeschichte as a life of escape and travel, for which the final destination is Zurich, where he settles and becomes a freelance writer and editor of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, his narrative of self-fulfillment now complete.

As opposed to *Ein Mönchsleben*, Casanova's memoir does not invoke his personal recovery from smallpox illness in order to construct an overarching narrative of self-growth. For Casanova, the inner emotional stages of his conversion convey self-growth through an experience of inner reflection: smallpox articulates the highpoint of this process of inner growth opposed to the actual process itself. As opposed to Bronner's direct experience with smallpox illness, Casanova's inner conversion results from a vicarious emotional experience of Bettina's smallpox illness: Casanova's recognition of Bettina's inner virtue in the wake of her smallpox illness allows him to obtain inner grace in the final moment of his conversion, as he embraces "divine intelligence" (*göttliche Klugheit*) as a higher plane of truth.

Lastly, I analyze Casanova's ensuing episodes of erotic adventure within the context of the alienated Enlightenment subject (Horkheimer and Adorno); my recognition of the alienated Enlightened subject in Casanova's memoir reveals it to be a work of modern subjectivity, despite the fact that it demonstrates the structure of the role-player memoir as opposed to a narrative of unique individual growth. In the final stage of his conversion, Casanova embraces Bettina's divine intelligence as an instrument with which he controls the external world in his later seductions and deceptions. Casanova's transformation into libertine adventurer allows him to assume the subjective stance of the alienated Enlightenment subject (Horkheimer



and Adorno), whose perceived ability to control nature derives from his separation from it, or the “Distanz zur Sache, die der Herr durch den Beherrschten gewinnt” (Horkheimer and Adorno 19). Casanova’s memoir, while invoking the established cultural value of the libertine adventurer through a “Rollenspiel” (Neumann), also empowers this role-playing narrator by granting him control over the external world that he manipulates: Casanova consciously plans his seductions of women, thereby emphasizing the subjectivity of an individual will. After his conversion experience, Casanova repeatedly demonstrates his stance as the alienated Enlightenment subject in his seductions and deceptions, remaining true to the episodic form of the role-player memoir, yet remaining separate from the constructed narrative of self-fulfillment (Kittler) associated with the Bildungsroman and the modern autobiography of Bildung.

#### B. Bronner’s Rejection of the Sacrament as Spiritual Conflict

Bronner begins his autobiography by relating anecdotes of family history and early childhood reflections of his upbringing in Höchstädt. Paralleling his life story of emancipation from his monk’s life, Bronner describes the Catholic educational establishment as a negative environment in which one may grow up. Bronner explains, for example, that his father exhibits a “melancholischen Charakter” and a “gewisse Düsterteit” due to his cruel upbringing among the Capuchins: “wenn er betete, so war es mit vieler Ängstlichkeit und Anstrengung: Wie hätte auch ein schuldloser Knabe Gott nicht als einen strengen Richter mit Schüchternheit anrufen sollen, dessen vorgebliche Statthalter, die Beichväter, ihn so überaus strenge und unerbittlich behandelten?” (Band I, 8 - 9). That fact that Bronner’s father addresses

the Lord in prayer with “Ängstlichkeit” suggests that the “Beichväter” have taught him a misguided form of spirituality.

Bronner also describes his own dark impressions of cruelty at the Catholic school of his childhood: “ich sah schon in der ersten Stunde allerlei greuliche Exekutionen. Da bekam einer mit der Ochsensehne einen mörderlichen *Spaniol* auf die gespannten Beinkleider (Band I, 47);” the “Stiefelnonnen” of his school were also in the habit of leading a student into the so-called “Speckkämmerlein,” “wo ihm entweder mit der Rute oder gar mit der Ochsensehne das nackte Sitzfleisch fürchterlich durchgegerbt ward” (Band I, 47). The illustration of his father’s melancholy informs Bronner’s potentiality of adopting the same demeanor in the wake of his own experiences with the cruelty of the nuns; these descriptions of the Bavarian Catholic educational establishment in the opening chapters of *Ein Mönchsleben* create a negative atmosphere that Bronner first rejects during his smallpox conversion.

Bronner’s smallpox illness begins as an inner bodily experience of heightened subjectivity. Bronner becomes sick at church when, for the first time in his life, he receives communion and ingests the sacral wine:

[...] als der Mesner mir den Weinbecher darbot, der sogleich nach der Kommunion herumgegeben wird, um die Hostie hinabzuspülen, schüttelte ich den Kopf vor dem Weine, wie einer, der etwas Ekelhaftes in den Mund gebracht hat. Wirklich hatte ich geglaubt, der Wein sei ein süßes, angenehmes Getränk; aber nun entdeckte ich mit Ekel, dass er nicht viel besser als Essig schmeckte. Einst empfand ich auf einmal Übelkeiten in der

Kirche. Man trug mich hinaus und setzte mich auf einen Stein vor der Pforte des Kapuzinerklosters. Ich erholte mich und wankte nach Haus. Da brachte mich die Mutter zu Bette, und ich bekam starken Fieberfrost. Nicht lange, so zeigten sich die Blattern. (Band I, 95 - 96)

Bronner's smallpox illness, which he contracts after ingesting the host, places an emphasis on his body as a space of inner subjective experience (Butler). Contrary to Bronner's expectations, the sacrament tastes "nicht viel besser als Essig" and induces a physical repulsion that he alone experiences—Bronner's use of the word "disgust" (*Ekel*) communicates a negative physical reaction experienced solely within his body, and thereby does not allow the reader to share in his full experience of disgust. Furthermore, Bronner's repulsion to the sacral wine leads directly to smallpox, representing a prolonged illness that, as an experience of incommunicable inner subjectivity, cannot be perceived outwardly. Bronner describes a prolonged period of time in which he becomes sick at church, stumbles home, is put to bed and develops a fever (*Fieberfrost*), while his smallpox illness develops within his body, hidden from the reader's eye. Bronner's smallpox illness represents a highly personal experience that, taking place within the hidden sphere of his inner body, is signaled outwardly by his wavering bodily movements, as he sits to recover himself in the convent and "stumbles" (*wankte*) home to his sickbed. In alliance with Avrahami's claim that the sick body represents a space of inexpressible subjective experience, Bronner's outer body obscures the inner processes of his illness from the reader; nonetheless, his wavering bodily

movements pinpoint his changed body as a location of an inner subjective experience.

Bronner's subjective illness experience articulates an inner conflict that parallels Augustine's inner spiritual turmoil leading up to his conversion. In Book Eight of *Confessions*, Augustine explains his hesitation in renouncing his worldly desires, admitting that his "former wilfulness" has been "hardened in me by so long continuance" (Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 425). His self is alluded to as an interior space where his worldly and spiritual desires engage in conflict: "thus did my two wills, one new and tother old, that carnal, and this spiritual, try masteries within me, and by their disagreeing wasted out my soul" (Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 425). Similar to Augustine's inner conflict of "two wills," Bronner's physical reaction to the "disgusting" (*ekelhafter*) sacral wine communicates a conflict of the inner self, rather than a purely physiological conflict of the body. Bronner's "Übelkeiten in der Kirche" and ensuing smallpox illness constitute an inner disagreement between the sacral wine and his physical constitution. His prolonged period of sickness, as he stumbles home to his sickbed, alludes to an ongoing internal battle of the inner self against the sacral wine as an overwhelming foreign disturbance: the ingested sacral wine is not a "süßes, angenehmes Getränk" that agrees with Bronner's physical disposition, rather it disagrees with it, creating an opposing duality between Bronner's inner self and the sacrament. The opposition between Bronner's inner body and the sacral wine conveys an inner contradiction between two irreconcilable forces, similar to Augustine's inner struggle of the "two wills."

Bronner's inner conflict, deriving from his rejection of the sacrament,

constructs his smallpox conversion as a narrative of self-fulfillment. As the initiating moment of Bronner's *Bildungsgeschichte*, his inner physical rejection of the sacral wine constitutes a highly personal rejection of the Catholic Church, which disciplines him through "dreadful executions" (*greuliche Exekutionen*) in order to steer the direction of his life into religious service. This initial rejection of the sacrament forshadowes his later renouncement of the Church: as a young man, Bronner once again expresses his disapproval for the sacrament shortly after he, at the age of twenty-five, receives the holy orders (*Priesterweihe*), and shortly before he makes the decision to flee the monastery Heilig Kreuz. Bronner expresses his misgivings about the irrationality of the sacrament that he, as a newly ordained priest, would now have to administer: he finds it nonsensical that "aus einem kleinen, sichtbaren Stückchen Brod einen unsichtbaren, essbaren Gott zu machen [ist]" (Band I, 510). Although his disagreement with the logic of the sacrament expresses his incongruity with the office of the Catholic priest, he feels that he is trapped within his religious life: "es mir [gar] nicht einfiel, es gebe einen Ausweg, den unauflöslichen Fesseln des Mönchsstandes zu entinnen" (Band I, 511). In this passage, Bronner is articulating his awareness that the Catholic Church is exerting control over the course of his life: his recent "Priesterweihe" causes him to refer to his position in the Church as "unbreakable shackles" (*unauflösliche Fesseln*), indicating his realization that the promotion is itself a significant gesture in "chaining" him to his monk's life.

In the chapter following his recognition of the "unbreakable shackles" of the monk's life, Bronner makes the conscious decision to break free of them: "auf einmal

stand der Gedanke in meiner Seele: 'Du musst fort von hier, wenn du nicht ganz verderben willst!' Und ich fühlte, dass ich fort müsste und beschloss zu gehen" (Band II, 35). By making the decision to flee his monastery, Bronner is portraying his Bildungsgeschichte as predicated on self-fulfillment: Bronner departs from the "Mönchsstand" and pursues a course of life based on an inner "feeling" that his well-being depends on an escape from his current circumstances, in which he may "spoil" (*verderben*). Bronner's initial "feeling" that the "Mönchsstand" poses a threat to his personal well-being first presents itself in his reaction to the sacral wine, the moment in which his incongruity with Catholic Church manifests in a sickly, repulsive physical sensation: it is the moment in which he first senses an incongruity between his inner self and the "Fesseln des Mönchsstandes."

### C. Bronner's Smallpox Illness as Spiritual Transformation

Bronner's smallpox illness also reflects Augustine's conversion by expressing a struggle with his pustule-ridden body, as his smallpox pustules externalize an inner spiritual conflict. Augustine's "soul-sick" state is reflected outwardly, in his unhealthy appearance: "[...] my forehead, cheeks, eyes, colour, tone of voice, spake my mind more than the words I uttered" (Pusey, 159 -160). In parallel with his "soul-sick" state, Augustine grapples with his body as the source of the "biting cares" and the "itch of lust" of his worldly desires (Vol. II, Trans. Watts, 5). In his despair, Augustine writes: "[...] I tare myself by the hair, beat my forehead [...] locking my fingers one within another I beclasp'd my knee [...]. So many things I therefore now did, at such time as the will was not all at one with the power [...]" (Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 447). Augustine expresses his inner turmoil through bodily abuse, as he

“tares” at his hair and “beats” his forehead; his struggles express his despair surrounding his lack of control of his worldly desires.

Similar to Augustine, Bronner describes his smallpox illness as a physical irritation. In the later stages of his illness, Bronner writes: “als die Blattern abzudorren anfangen, verursachten sie mir ein heftiges Jucken und Beissen. Ich konnte mich nicht mehr enthalten, sie loszukratzen [...] allein ich steckte den Kopf unbemerkt unter das Bett und riss ab, was ich konnte” (Band I, 96 - 97). Similar to Augustine, Bronner wildly grapples with his smallpox-covered body, expressing a sense of panic over his irritated physical state. Resulting from the ingestion of the sacral wine, Bronner’s smallpox develops from an inner conflict with his disgust (*Ekel*) into an intense bodily irritation. His grappling with his irritated skin represents the prolonged effects of his inner conflict: the “severe itching and biting” (“heftiges Jucken und Beissen”) of the smallpox pustules escalates Bronner’s sense of panic as he remains helpless over the internal illness, similar to Augustine’s escalated sense of panic as he grapples with his body, the source of the “biting cares” and the “itch of lust” of worldly desire, and the vessel of the inner struggle between “two wills.”

Bronner’s smallpox episode, drawing from Augustine’s conversion, depicts a healing of both the sick soul as well as its externalized bodily torments, finally resulting in a state of mental serenity and clarity. Augustine’s conversion transforms his spiritual despair and physical agony into a state of serenity and health. In Book Nine, Augustine describes his recent conversion as an “antidote” that brings the sick soul back into spiritual order: Augustine refers to the “wholesome herbs of the

Church” as “the antidote against serpents” (Pusey 174), and describes “sacraments” as “medicines” that may recover unbelievers from their “madness” (Pusey 175). Furthermore, he describes his cured soul in the aftermath of his conversion as a serene spiritual state, remarking that it is “pleasant” to be without the “sweets” and “toys” of his past worldly life, because he can bask in God’s mercy as the “chiefest Sweetness” (Vol. II, Trans. Watts, 3). The word “sweetness” describes Augustine’s pleasant state of mind that calms his past “madness,” as well as the “biting cares” and “itch of lust” of his old life. Similar to Augustine, Bronner is delivered from the physical torments of his illness—the mad itching of his pustules—as he heals from smallpox:

Da war ich einst an einem schönen Nachmittage allein zu Hause. Ein Fenster stand offen. Der lieblichste Rosengeruch duftete herein. Denn am Zaune unseres Gärtchens blühte ein alter Rosenstrauch [...] die Begierde, Rosen zu haben, trieb mich aus dem Bett. Ich konnte zwar von Schwachheit noch nicht gehen, aber ich kroch auf allen vieren und mühte mich sehr ab, bis ich etliche Rosen hatte. Ich nahm sie in den Mund und kroch wieder ins Haus. Der Sonnenschein hatte mir sehr geschmeichelt. Nicht ohne Schwierigkeit stieg ich wieder ins Bett und tändelte mit meinen Blumen, bis die Mutter kam. O, wie begierig schlürfte ich ihren süssen Wohlgeruch in mich! [...] Allein ich ward bald ganz gesund und konnte wieder die Schule besuchen. (Band I, 97 - 98)

The language evoked in Bronner’s smallpox recovery is similar to Augustine’s



recognition of God's "sweetness:" Bronner's evocation of the "beautiful afternoon" evokes a mood in which one, undistracted by bodily "itches," can calmly observe the outside world. Bronner's appreciation for the "sweetest scent of roses" ("der lieblichste Rosengeruch") represents an acceptance for the outside world as it is; his recovery from the torments of smallpox reveals an awakening mental clarity expressed in his appreciation for nature. Furthermore, the image of the scent of roses entering Bronner's sickroom represents a broadening of his consciousness: the barriers of his confined mental state break down as he embraces the serene beauty of the larger world, symbolized by the pasture out his window. Bronner's newfound mental clarity mirrors Augustine's spiritual clarity, as he is cured of his bodily torments of worldly desire and assumes the serene spiritual state of the converted, in which "all the darkness of doubting [vanishes] away" so that he may go through life with a "well-quieted countenance" (Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 465).

#### D. Bronner's Conversion as the Initiation of Bildung

Bronner's newfound mental clarity as he recovers from smallpox allows him to discover his inner desire to become a writer of idylls; this discovery represents a pinnacle moment in Bronner's narrative of self-fulfillment. Bronner's desire to obtain the rose bush out his bedroom window foreshadows his later literary pursuits in Zurich: after escaping from his monastery and arriving in Zurich, he befriends Heinrich Geßner, son of Salomon Geßner, who encourages him to publish his idylls. Bronner admits that "noch nie hatte ich's gewagt, eines meiner Fischergedichte jemandem in Zürich zu zeigen" (Band II, 161), however, with Heinrich Geßner's encouragement, Bronner is inspired to pursue his writing more

earnestly (“ich nahm alle Zeit, die mir von meinen Geschäften übrig blieb, zusammen und arbeitete allerlei kleine und grössere Gedichte aus” [Band II, 167]), and publishes his first collection *Fischergedichte und Erzählungen*<sup>16</sup> with Orell, Füßli, Geßner und Comp., where he has been working as a typesetter, in 1787 (Radspieler 10 – 11). Bronner’s inspiration to write idylls, a literary form that celebrates nature, is sparked during his smallpox episode, when he embraces the beauty of the pasture with the newfound mental clarity of one who has been healed of his physical torments. His desire to crawl out to the rose bush to obtain flowers expresses his desire to possess idyllic beauty, and to encapsulate it in poetry—the moment in which he “dallies” (*tändeln*) with the roses in his hands while lying in bed even conveys the image of him leisurely leafing through a book of poetry.

Bronner’s smallpox episode represents the moment when his love of nature assumes a more personal aspect: he obtains the roses as an expression of self-fulfillment, similar to how his later idylls express the self-fulfillment of his new life in Zurich after fleeing from the “shackles” (*Fesseln*) of the monk’s life. His newfound motivation to write idylls (his “neue Lust zur Tätigkeit”) reflects his drive to personalize the liberating circumstances of his new, fulfilling life in Zurich, similar to how his possession of the roses personalizes his appreciation for the beauty of the pasture. Bronner’s attraction to the idyll as a symbol of a more natural, liberated life can be explained by its political associations: Geßner’s idylls attracted the

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<sup>16</sup> In the first edition of *Fischergedichten und Erzählungen*, Salomon Geßner writes the preface. Geßner stresses that Bronner’s early literary attempts arise from his extended hours of contemplation as a young monk: “Der Verfasser hat diese Gedichte in einsamen Stunden der Musse verfertigt; vom Fenster seiner Kloster – Zelle [...] hatte er die ausgebreitete Aussicht auf einen Fluss, und seine schattenreichen Ufer, und auf die anmuthigen Inseln, die er umschwamm” (*Fischergedichte*, 1).

“anticlerical” and “anticourtly” opposition that was “weary of absolutist decadence” and “worried about the reckless rising of capitalism” (Bersier 38 – 43). Bronner’s own idylls express a utopian counter-reality to world of religious and classist institutions.<sup>17</sup>

Bronner’s literary activities play a central role in constructing his *Bildungsgeschichte* as a narrative of self-fulfillment. His childhood smallpox conversion initiates his *Bildungsgeschichte* by allowing him to identify with idyllic beauty more personally, and to possess it for himself; this inner desire provides the motivation for his perpetual return to Zurich. After fleeing his Bavarian monastery, he is discovered in Zurich and ordered home by the Catholic authorities in Augsburg, where he spends the next few years in unfulfilling religious service. Bronner describes how his disagreements with Herr von Ungelter, the man in charge of his duties in Augsburg, cause him to recognize his dissatisfaction with his life and prompt him to escape for Zurich once again.<sup>18</sup> Bronner recognizes Herr von Ungelter’s constant desire to “humiliate” him and to hold “on a chain” (“an der Kette”) and therefore decides that he must become master of his own destiny. Bronner tells himself: “auf wen kannst du sonst deine Hoffnung bauen? – Weg denn von hier! In Augsburg grünt dir kein Glück!” (Band III, 227). Bronner’s recognition of his dissatisfying life causes him to once again flee to Zurich.

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<sup>17</sup> Eisenbeiss notices that, in the forward to his poetry volume *Lustfahrten ins Idyllenland* (1833), Bronner refers to land workers as the “rechtliche Erdbewohner” of a “schönere Welt” (12 – 17).

<sup>18</sup> Bronner’s dissatisfaction with his duties reflects the atmosphere of the Catholic Enlightenment in Germany during the outgoing eighteenth century. Lehner explains that “enlightened” Benedictine monks, such as Bronner, exhibited strong beliefs in “individual freedom,” “tolerance,” and “human rights,” and held convictions that the “church” and “monastic life” “had to change and adapt to society” (2 – 3).

As Bronner once again enters Zurich, this time by canoe, he begins to write a new idyll to signify his return to his life of self-fulfillment: “erst nach einigen Tagen vollendete ich mein kleines Gedicht und formte den Aufsatz durch Beifügung der angenehmen Umstände meiner Fahrt und des Empfangs in eine Idylle um” (Band III, 411). By embodying the “more pleasant circumstances” (“angenehmere Umstände”) of his return to Zurich in an idyll, Bronner is expressing his return as a journey of self-fulfillment: the idyll poeticizes and personalizes the events of his life, allowing him to possess them the way he possesses the rose bush. After a short sojourn in France, Bronner finally settles in Zurich, where he becomes editor of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* and also lives from freelance literary work (“einige literarischen Arbeiten”) (Band III, 556). Bronner’s Bildungsgeschichte begins with his recognition of his inner artistic inclinations during his childhood smallpox episode, prompting his escape from his monk’s life in pursuit of a literary life, and ends as he settles in Zurich and begins to lead this literary life in stability. His socialization into author and editor is therefore constructed as a narrative of self-fulfillment.

#### E. Casanova: Master of Deception

Just as Augustine begins his life story by addressing his audience as one who has been converted, Casanova begins his memoirs by addressing himself to his audience as a seducer and deceiver, although his conversion experience takes place in the first chapter. In the preface of his memoir, Casanova illustrates his identity as seducer and deceiver; this illustration establishes the narrative tone of the modern subject that is empowered by its manipulations of the external world. Casanova

refers to the “fools” (*Toren*), “rogues” (*Schelme*) and “idiots” (*Dummköpfe*) he has manipulated throughout the course of his life: “noch jetzt wünsche ich mir Glück, so oft ich mich erinnere, einen in meine Netze gelockt zu haben [...]” (Band I, 3). Casanova’s reference to “fools,” “rogues” and “idiots” imply an intellectual superiority through which he can exert control over social interactions. His possession of “nets,” as well as his ability to “lure” others into them, indicate a narrator who retains a psychological power over others: Casanova’s superior intelligence attributes him with a certain predatory dominance that presents a danger to the fools and idiots within the universe of his life story. Casanova also refers to the women he has deceived throughout his life, although he categorizes them as separate from the idiots and fools he has encountered, since he believes that in matters of love both parties are usually guilty of deception (Band I, 3). Casanova’s superior intelligence, as a predatory psychological power, facilitates his deceptions of idiots and his seductions of women alike.

In the first chapter of his memoir, directly following the preface, Casanova describes his initial recognition of “divine intelligence” (*göttliche Klugheit*), and then embraces it in his transformation into a superior master of deception who “lures” women into his “nets.” In Chapter One of Book One, the adolescent Casanova moves from Venice to Padua for his education. After a short stay at a boarding house, he takes up residence with Dr. Gozzi, a young priest and schoolmaster, and Dr. Gozzi’s younger sister, Bettina (Band I, 30). After becoming Casanova’s first lover, Bettina deceives him by carrying on a secret affair throughout her relationship with him. Casanova’s inner emotional process of understanding and accepting Bettina’s

betrayal includes his renouncement of his feelings of scorn and jealousy toward her, and his embracing of her divine intelligence with which she keeps her affair secret from Casanova (Casanova admits that he is “completely duped [“gründlich angeführt”] by Bettina [Band I, 42]). Casanova’s inner emotional experience regarding Bettina parallels the stages of the emotional process of Augustine’s conversion: first through *despair* deriving from Bettina’s betrayal, then *relief* as he begins to understand Bettina’s divine intelligence as a seductress, then *doubt* as he expresses his lingering feelings of scorn and jealousy for Bettina, and finally *conversion* as he embraces Bettina’s superior intelligence, in the “purest friendship,” and becomes the libertine adventurer of his adult life.

#### F. Casanova and the Stages of Conversion

In the first stage of the emotional progression of his conversion, Augustine despairs over his “unclean” state of carnal desire (Pusey 166). Early in Book Eight of *Confessions*, Augustine expresses a desire to convert to Christianity and live in God’s grace, despite that he still harbors base feelings of carnality. Augustine describes his despair regarding his attachments to worldly concerns and desires that he retained for most of his life: “very unpleasant to me it was, that I led the life of a worldling: yea, a very grievous burden it was, those desires after the hopes of honour and profit inflaming me [...]” (Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 405). Although Augustine admits that he was eventually able to release himself from his “hopes of honour and profit,” his carnal desires persist: “very strongly yet was I enthralled with the love of a woman” (Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 405). Augustine’s “desperate condition” derives from his dissatisfaction with himself as still susceptible to carnal desires, despite his yearning

to live in God's grace (Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 415).

Similar to Augustine, Casanova struggles emotionally with worldly desires based in carnality: his despair over Bettina's betrayal derives from his desire to possess her as a lover. Casanova discovers Bettina's betrayal when he secretly visits her room in the night and, to his surprise, encounters her lover Cordiani, a young man who also takes lodgings in Dr. Gozzi's home; Cordiani kicks Casanova in the stomach before running out of the room (Band I, 40). Casanova feels "betrayed," "humiliated" and "mistreated" by Bettina ("betrogen, erniedrigt, misshandelt"), and spends hours "plotting the darkest revenge" against her and her lover ("so verbrachte ich drei Stunden damit, die schwärzesten Racheplänen nachzuhängen" [Band I, 40]). Casanova's feelings of "betrayal" and "humiliation" are a reflection of his worldly desires for Bettina: Casanova's negative feelings arise when his possession of Bettina as a lover is threatened by Cordiani, who represents a competitor in worldly amorous affairs. Casanova's earthly attachments to Bettina through physical love allow him to feel betrayed and humiliated by her when their relationship is threatened. Furthermore, Casanova's plans for revenge reflect a mindset in which low worldly affairs take precedence over a serene, meditative awareness of God's grace, an awareness exemplified by Bronner's serene mental state after he attains the rose bush in *Ein Mönchsleben*.

Augustine and Casanova both experience carnality as the root cause of inner emotional turmoil: Augustine's emotional anguish over his unclean state in the eyes of God translates into Casanova's despair as a scorned lover. As the first stage in the emotional process of their respective conversion, the emotional anguish

experienced by Augustine and Casanova is also attended by a sense of urgency regarding the relief of their inner turmoil: Augustine hopes to relieve it through his anticipated embracing of God's mercy, and Casanova through a desperate act of revenge.

Casanova experiences a moment of relief from his despair when he first begins to discern Bettina's divine intelligence; this moment of relief parallels Augustine's respite from his inner conflict of "two wills," as he first begins to discern God's grace. After discovering a note revealing that Bettina and Cordiani had been carrying on an affair throughout the duration of her relationship with Casanova, Casanova begins to appreciate Bettina's adeptness at seduction: "als ich sah, wie gründlich ich angeführt worden war, ich glaubte mich von meiner Liebe geheilt" (Band I, 42). Casanova describes his love as a sickness of the inner self, in tandem with the discourse of inner healing in the narrative of conversion. Casanova's inner emotional conflict is temporarily healed as he reflects on Bettina's divine intelligence as a superior mental state, one that transcends his petty mental state of scorn and jealousy; as he reads the note, Casanova momentarily transcends from his lowly mental state of worldly scorn to this higher realm of divine intelligence. Augustine also transcends his lowly mental state of worldly anguish when, shortly before his conversion, he begins to hear a "voice" of his deliverance: "[...] now it spake very faintly. For on that side whither I had set my face, and whither I trembled to go, there appeared unto me the chaste dignity of Continency, serene, yet not relaxedly, gay, honestly alluring me to come and doubt not; and stretching forth to receive and embrace me [...]" (Pusey 165).



Similar to Casanova, Augustine experiences the sublime through positive feelings, described as “serene” and “gay,” that temporarily relieve him of his anguish. Augustine experiences the “chaste dignity of Continency” as a form of mental control over the anguish of his “unclean” state; this recognition of the “chaste dignity of Continency” translates into Casanova’s recognition of Bettina’s divine intelligence, which, as a similar form of mental control, calms his intense feelings of scorn and jealousy. When confronting Bettina about the incriminating note he discovers, Casanova illustrates how he harnesses his bitter emotions through a superior mental state. Casanova tells Bettina:

Als ich nach der von Cordiani erlittenen Misshandlung wieder in meinem Zimmer war, habe ich Sie zuerst gehasst; bald aber verwandelte der Hass sich in Verachtung, und als ich allmählich ruhig wurde, entwickelte sich aus der Verachtung eine vollkommene Gleichgültigkeit; auch diese Gleichgültigkeit entschwand, als ich sah, wessen Ihr Geist fähig ist. Ich bin Ihr Freund geworden, ich verzeihe Ihnen Ihre Schwächen, und nachdem ich mich gewöhnt habe, Sie so zu sehen wie Sie sind, habe ich von Ihrer Klugheit die beste Meinung bekommen. Ich bin selber von ihr angeführt worden, aber das macht nichts; Ihre Klugheit ist nun einmal da, sie ist überraschend, göttlich; ich liebe sie, ich bewundere sie, und mich dünkt, ich bin Ihnen schuldig, Ihre Klugheit zu ehren, indem ich Ihnen selber die reinste Freundschaft weihe (Band I, 52).

Casanova’s speech illustrates the transition from a state of inner turmoil to

divine grace through the development of a negative raw emotion—“hate” (*Hass*)—into an awakened intellectual curiosity. Casanova’s inner development reflects Augustine’s assumption of a calm, controlled mental state through “chaste Continency,” with which he settles his emotional anguish connected with the pains of his carnal desires. Similar to Augustine, Casanova assumes control over inner turmoil as he transitions from a base emotion of “hate” into “contempt” (*Verachtung*), the latter communicating a more rational disagreement with Bettina, and then “contempt” into “indifference” (*Gleichgültigkeit*), the latter communicating complete mental control over his negative emotions. Casanova’s final state of admiration for Bettina’s intelligence represents his initial recognition of his own ability to retain a superior mindset of divine intelligence, in which one exercises control over his environment through calculated seductions and deceptions.

In Augustine’s *Confessions*, conversion is preceded directly by a moment of doubt. Despite his initial exposure to the serenity of God’s grace, Augustine once again begins to lament his unclean state, appealing to God directly: “[...] when a deep consideration had from the secret bottom of my soul drawn together and heaped up all my misery in the sight of my heart; there arose a mighty storm, bringing a mighty shower of tears [...] How long, how long [...] Why not now? Why not is there at this hour an end to my uncleanness?” (Pusey 166). The “deep consideration” elicited from the “secret bottom of [Augustine’s] soul” implies the final admittance to a deep-seated doubt of his ability to live in God’s grace, as well as a highly significant expression of the innermost self. The gravity of Augustine’s despair over his unclean state is expressed in his allusions to a “mighty storm” and a

“mighty shower of tears:” his inner turmoil escalates to a point of finality as he reveals the full scope of his inner despair. Directly after this intense lamentation, however, Augustine receives the divine mercy of God and is converted. Augustine relates how, in the throes of despair, he suddenly hears a child’s voice imploring him to “take up and read.” Upon reading a passage from St. Paul, he is instantly converted and succored from his doubt: “no further would I read; nor needed I: for instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light as it were of serenity infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away” (Pusey 167). The most emotionally intense, and therefore most complete expression of the inner self results in a complete conversion into the serenity of God’s mercy.

Augustine’s moment of doubt is reflected in the surfacing of Casanova’s lingering worldly attachments to Bettina when she becomes ill. Due to the emotional pressure of the love triangle between Casanova, Cordiani and herself, Bettina is overcome by hysterical convulsions (Band I, 40 - 41). Despite his newfound admiration for Bettina upon discovering her note to Cordiani, Casanova still desires Bettina, and remains spiteful about her betrayal. Casanova expresses jealousy toward Pater Mancina, the handsome cleric who comes to visit Bettina in her distress. Casanova’s jealousy toward Pater Mancina is exacerbated by his suspicions that Bettina is faking her hysterical convulsions in order to be visited by the handsome cleric. Revealing his jealousy and suspicion, Casanova insists that Bettina prove her loyalty to him: “ich [sagte] ihr, es gäbe für sie nur ein einziges Mittel, meine zärtliche Liebe zurückzugewinnen: sie müsse einen ganzen Monat frei von krämpfen sein, und es dürfe nicht wieder vorkommen, dass der schöne Pater Mancina geholt werden

müsse" (Band I, 59). The fact that Casanova invites Bettina to win back his love reveals that he still desires to possess her as a lover. Furthermore, his suspicions that she is deceiving him through a faked illness reveal his digression into a mindset of worldly concern and conflict: in his appeal to Bettina, Casanova is not expressing an elevated admiration for her divine intelligence, rather he imagines himself once again to be a victim of her deception, in which he must once again compete with another man, this time the handsome Pater Mancina.

In the wake of Bettina's hysterical illness, she comes down with smallpox; the outbreak of Bettina's smallpox pustules parallels Augustine's moment of conversion, and represents the moment in which Casanova becomes instantly converted into a libertine master of deception. Casanova continues to doubt the veracity of Bettina's illness as her smallpox fever sets in: "das Fieber konnte echt sein; aber ich zweifelte daran" (Band I, 59). Casanova's doubt is instantly lifted when "am vierten Tage brachen die Pocken aus. Cordiani und die beiden Feltrini, die die Krankheit noch nicht gehabt hatten, wurden sofort aus dem Hause geschafft; mit mir war es anders, und ich blieb daher allein zurück" (Band I, 59). The fact that Casanova alone remains by Bettina's side, while Cordiani and the other lodgers of Dr. Gozzi's home are sent away, implies that Casanova's feelings of scorn and jealousy have dissipated. Casanova establishes a true friendship with Bettina once her deceptive veneer is destroyed by the veracity of her illness: after her illness, Bettina loves Casanova "without pretense" ("ohne jede Verstellung") (Band I, 61). Bettina's smallpox outbreak causes Casanova to relinquish his feelings of scorn and jealousy, and to fully embrace her divine intelligence. Casanova is infected by a few of Bettina's

pocks, which scar him for life (Band I, 61); not only do these scars signify an unbreakable bond between Casanova and Bettina,<sup>19</sup> they also indicate that Casanova has become imbued with Bettina's divine intelligence, the powerful force that draws him to her in the first place—his scars mark him as a newly and permanently transformed practitioner of this divine intelligence.

Casanova's moment of conversion consists in his total renouncement of his low, worldly feelings of scorn and jealousy for Bettina, in exchange for his appropriation of divine intelligence as an instrument of seduction and deception. Casanova's renouncement of his desire for Bettina parallels Augustine's renouncement of carnal desire: just as Augustine decides not to take a wife after his conversion ("I sought no more after a wife, nor any other hopes in this world" [Vol. I, Trans. Watts, 467]), Casanova begins to love Bettina in chastity: "ich liebte sie ebenso zärtlich, ohne jedoch eine Blume zu pflücken, die das Schicksal im Bunde mit dem Vorurteil für die Ehre aufbewahrte" (Band I, 61). As opposed to Augustine, however, Casanova's chastity does not express a renouncement of his carnal desire, rather it expresses a renouncement of his inferior and conventional feelings deriving from his desire to possess Bettina as a lover. It is ironic that Casanova invokes chastity in order to illustrate the beginning of an unchaste course of life. Casanova's renouncement of his scorn toward Bettina indicates that he has ascended to a realm of moral superiority: as a master of deception empowered by

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<sup>19</sup> Cornelia Zumbusch explains that, during the eighteenth century, the notion of infection came to connote the passing of strong emotions (*Leidenschaften*) between people through conceptualizations of sympathy, empathy, affection, enthusiasm, and inspiration (Zumbusch 11). The shared smallpox pustules symbolize an emotional bond between Casanova and Bettina.

divine intelligence, Casanova no longer concerns himself with the pettiness of the scorned lover. He is no longer emotionally tied to the conventionality of romantic relationships, rather he has been liberated from the emotional obstacles that would hinder him from betraying others in acts of seduction, or that would cause him to feel wronged when he himself is betrayed by a lover.

Through the image of smallpox, Casanova invokes Christian virtue as a means to describe his renouncement of worldly desire for Bettina and his simultaneous conversion into a libertine seducer. Ted Emery contends that Bettina's smallpox illness draws from a novelistic model, namely the smallpox scene in Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*: "[the] entire, concluding section of the Bettina episode is carefully modeled on a sequence in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (Part III, letters 12-14) in which Julie, torn between her desire for Saint-Preux and her filial duty, falls ill with smallpox" (87). According to Emery, the illustration of Bettina's smallpox illness deliberately draws on the character of Julie as a heroine of sentimental virtue in order to describe Bettina as possessing the same virtue<sup>20</sup> (287). Casanova's newfound discovery of Bettina's inner virtue, made apparent in her smallpox outbreak, allows him to express the highpoint of his inner emotional transformation into a seducer through the language of Christian sentimentality:

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<sup>20</sup> According to Ted Emery, the Bettina episode evokes the sentimental novel in constructing Bettina's deceptive veneer. Samuel Richardson's epistolary novel *Pamela* (1740) created a schism in the literary world of the eighteenth-century: while some interpreted the letters of Pamela, the novel's protagonist, as a "totally transparent representation of her feelings and motivations," others saw them as a "performance of deceit." According to Emery, Bettina's character "gives a narrative performance that like the letters in a sentimental novel seek to (re)constitute virtue and create a morally authentic self. But Casanova does not see her performance as authentic, any more than skeptical eighteenth-century readers automatically accepted the authenticity of Richardson's Pamela" (285).

Casanova is transformed by his discovery of Bettina's divine intelligence as an inner essence that exists independently from her corruptible flesh, not unlike the "inner beauties" of Richardson's Heroine Pamela (Shuttleton 123). As a sentimental representation of Christian virtue, Casanova's inner transformation is expressed in his own newfound affection for Bettina—Casanova now loves her with a newfound tenderness, and the permanence of the smallpox scars he obtains from her at her bedside betray the permanence of a gracious and "lasting" love associated with Christian virtue ("[die Pocken] machten mir Ehre bei Bettina, denn sie waren ein Zeichen meiner treuen Pflege, und sie erkannte jetzt an, daß ich ihre ausschließliche Zärtlichkeit verdiene" [Band I, 60-61]). The fact that Bettina acknowledges Casanova's "sincere caregiving" (*treue Pflege*) indicates that he is now also imbued with inner virtue in his pure love for Bettina.

By expressing his affections for the virtuous Bettina, Casanova illustrates the high point of his inner transformation in a spiritual tone that conforms to the tone of his preceding conversion experience. In Casanova's transformation into a free-spirited and convention-defying libertine adventurer, he describes his renouncement of moral conventionality as the renouncement of worldly desire, thereby invoking religious language; similarly, he describes the moment in which he fully renounces these worldly desires and completely transforms into the libertine adventurer as the obtaining of a gracious and virtuous inner state.

#### G. The Alienated Enlightenment Subject throughout Casanova's Memoir

Casanova's newfound liberated moral stance empowers him as an alienated Enlightenment subject. He sees himself as morally superior to those whom he

seduces and deceives—his sense of superiority alienates him from his environment, and allows him to control it with an elevated degree of freedom.

Casanova's newfound ability to control his environment as the alienated Enlightenment subject is demonstrated in an episode with the sisters Nannetta and Martina, taking place not long after his experience with Bettina. At the end of Chapter Three of Book One, Casanova leaves Dr. Gozzi's home in Padua and returns to Venice where, under the patronage of the rich and influential Abbot Grimani, a friend of his mother, he continues his religious education, and eventually receives the minor orders of priesthood from the Patriarch of Venice<sup>21</sup> (Band I, 66 - 67). During this time, Casanova becomes smitten with a young woman, Angela, whom he meets through her embroidery teacher. In hopes of procuring a private moment with Angela at her lodgings with Ms. Orio, Casanova and Angela devise a plan with the assistance of Nannetta and Martina, two sisters who also reside with Ms. Orio: after influencing Ms. Orio to invite the young abbot Casanova to her home for dinner, the young women sneak Casanova back into Ms. Orio's home after she has gone to bed (Band I, 95 - 108).

When Casanova fails to seduce Angela, the same plan is carried out a second time; this time, Casanova recognizes his ability to manipulate the sisters and decides

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<sup>21</sup> Casanova's religious career is fraught with upstarts and failures owing to his brash libertine ways: as a young man, he is admitted as an abbé in Venice; during this time he is ejected from the home of the Venetian senator Alvise Gasparo Malipiero after carrying on an affair with a young woman admired by the senator. For a brief period Casanova enters a seminary, however his stay is cut short when he is put into prison for outstanding debts. After this, Casanova spends another brief period at the see of Bernardo de Bernardis in Calabria, but abandons this place as well. He eventually procures the position of scribe with the Cardinal Acquaviva in Rome, however this position is also terminated after he humbly takes the fall for a scandal involving an illicit affair between two lovers (Masters 15-34).



to act upon it: “ich [sah] klar und deutlich, dass ich mit List und Hilfe von Kunstgriffen, deren Trageweite [Nannetta und Martina] nicht kennen konnten, sie leicht zu Gefälligkeiten bewegen könnte” (Band I, 108). Casanova clearly recognizes his ability to manipulate the situation through a cunning use of “artifice” (*Kunstgriffen*), specifically through appealing to the sisters’ emotions by speaking about Angela: “wir verbrachten eine Stunde damit, von Angela zu sprechen, und ich sagte ihnen, ich fühlte mich entschlossen, sie nicht mehr zu sehen, denn ich sei überzeugt, dass sie mich nicht liebe” (Band I, 108). While the plan devised by Casanova and the young women itself represents a cunning act of deception, Casanova’s revelation that he can seduce the sisters brings the narrative of deception into a more subjective sphere: Casanova recognizes his power to manipulate the circumstances through a strategic emotional appeal to the sisters, in which he presents himself as a sorrowful victim of love.

Casanova also exhibits a narrative distance from the circumstances of his seduction—directly before applying his artifices, he comments that he becomes “fest entschlossen, mich der Gefahr ihrer glühenden Küsse nicht mehr auszusetzen” (Band I, 108). Casanova’s conscious decision to seduce the sisters reflects an omnipotent power of the narrator in controlling his environment: rather than providing a straightforward episode of seduction in order to illustrate the libertine adventurer in the “role-player” memoir, Casanova spontaneously decides to deceive the women who were originally his co-conspirators in his plan to seduce Angela. This spontaneous decision reflects the freedom of the alienated Enlightenment subject: Casanova’s detachment from his environment, evident in the narrative

distance from it, awards him a higher degree of freedom in controlling it.

Casanova also engages in calculated deception of women who simultaneously deceive him, reflecting his comment in the preface that matters of love often involve deception from both sides (“wenn die Liebe mit ins Spiel kommt, sind gewöhnlich beide Teile angeführt” [Band I, 3]). In Chapter Ten of Book One, Casanova falls in love with the androgynous castrato singer Bellino. As Casanova, during a visit to Ancona, becomes acquainted with Bellino, he comes to suspect that he is a woman rather than a castrato (“ich [setzte] mir [in] den Kopf, der angebliche Bellino sei eine verkleidete Schönheit” [Band I, 286]). Casanova remains insistent in his suspicions, and decides to act upon them, although his plans are disrupted by Bellino’s sisters: “ich ließ Bellino sich auf mein Bett setzen in der Absicht ihm Komplimente zu machen und ihn als Mädchen zu behandeln, aber plötzlich kommen die beiden jungen Schwestern herein und laufen auf mich zu; dies warf meine Pläne über den Haufen” (Band I, 287). Similar to the episode involving Nannetta and Martina, Casanova creates a narrative distance between the self who describes the intentions behind his seduction, and the self that conducts the seduction: the reader is able to discern Casanova’s inviting behavior toward Bellino as a cloak of deception that obscures the true intentions of the inner self. Casanova eventually discovers that Bellino is truly a woman—her true name being Teresa, she admits that she secretly traveled to Ancona with her teacher, with whom she had fallen in love, in order to live with him. To cover up their relationship, Teresa poses as Bellino, a young castrato who has recently died while living abroad, while Teresa’s teacher and lover devises a special hose to be placed around her genital area, which Casanova’s

confuses for a penis during a moment of confrontation (Band I, 304 - 310).

Casanova's recognition of Bellino's deceptive veneer suggests the existence of the alienated Enlightenment subject within other characters of his memoir: since Casanova cloaks his inner self as the operator of his seductions and deceptions, the deceptive veneer of Bellino suggests a similar self that controls the external world from behind his own cloak of deception. Just as the objects of Casanova's deceptions are blind to his true intentions, so is Casanova initially blind to Bellino's (Teresa's) hidden agenda. Casanova's blindness in this regard extends to other characters, as well: according to Cynthia Craig, many of Casanova's women are characterized through a "play of interior and exterior, of mask and reality," which speaks to the text's thematization of "unfixed" and "oscillating" identities in the social realm (Craig 182). In Chapter Nineteen of Book Three, the chambermaid Raton presents Casanova with the threat of venereal disease after he solicits her for sex (Band III, 523). Craig suggests that the illustration of Raton's "detailed exterior physiognomy [is] fraudulent, a camouflage and a deceit," and that in Raton, venereal disease constitutes a "telegraphic indicator of corruption" that hints at the moral fraudulence of her exterior (Craig 182). Raton's true self, like her venereal disease, is hidden from sight, covered up by an innocent face that serves as the perfect camouflage: after discovering that Raton was infected with venereal disease, Casanova comments: "niemals hätte ich daran gedacht, ein junges Mädchen, das eine Haut von Lilien und Rosen hatte und höchstens achtzehn Lenze zählte, näher zu untersuchen" (Band III, 524). Casanova's discovery of Raton's venereal disease causes him to reflect on her innocent face as a fraudulent exterior; recognizing a

fellow deceiver in Raton, Casanova is reminded that he can also become the object of deception, in this case by having paid Raton for her services while under the false impression of her physical health.

Casanova's sensitivity to Raton's "flowerlike" skin ("Haut von Lilien und Rosen") as a deceptive exterior speaks to his general sensitivity to the mask of deception in amorous affairs. Although put off by his discovery of Bellino's fake penis, Casanova senses that he has become subject to Bellino's treachery: "jedoch trotz der Überzeugung, die ich erlangt zu haben glaubte, beherrschte Bellino, den meine Phantasie mir als Weib vorgestellt hatte, immer noch alle meine Gedanken. Dies war mir unbegreiflich" (Band I, 299). Casanova's use of the word "dominate" (*beherrschen*) intimates his awareness that he has become the object of Bellino's manipulations: Teresa, disguised as Bellino, has controlled Casanova by making him believe that she is a castrato. From the standpoint of the alienated Enlightenment subject, Teresa controls her environment, of which Casanova is a part, as a way to maintain her secret relationship with her teacher and lover with whom she had run away. While attempting to seduce Teresa, Casanova discovers that she is also manipulating the external world from the standpoint of her obscured inner self. This recognition expresses a broader understanding of modern subjectivity: rather than simply relating his amorous adventures as the acts of the modern subject, whose empowerment derives from his recognition of his separate alienated individuality, Casanova suggests that this same recognition of separate individuality exists in his lovers, who also exert control over the external world behind the mask of social interaction.

## H. Conclusion: The Libertine Memoir and the Autobiography of Bildung

The episodes of Casanova's seductions and deceptions described above reveal an adherence to the episodic role-player memoir of the libertine adventurer. Casanova's life story includes an aggregate of similar seductions of women, and crafty deceptions of his enemies, as he travels through various countries—Italy, France, Germany, Austria, England, Switzerland, among others—and finally settles in Dux in 1784, where he spends last fourteen years of his life writing his memoirs. Unlike the city of Zurich in *Ein Mönchsleben*, Dux does not represent the final destination of a story of self-fulfillment: Casanova does not actually arrive in Dux at the end of his memoirs, they end abruptly, as he awaits permission to return to Venice, after having been accused by the Inquisitors of State. An analysis of the Augustinian narrative of conversion offers insight into modern subjectivity and interiority between Casanova's role-player memoir, in which his social identity is predetermined, and Bronner's narrative of Bildung, in which his social identity is articulated through life experience. Bronner's smallpox conversion allows him to undergo an inner subjective experience that eventually leads to Zurich as the final destination of his life story; Bronner's Bildungsgeschichte expresses a socialization of the middle-class individual, in which the articulation of his identity is a life process. As a modern middle-class individual, Bronner does not possess a specific social identity, rather he must define it in the process of his life. As opposed to Bronner, Casanova adopts the predetermined social role of the libertine adventurer, and implements the memoir as a literary form concerned with the reinforcement of this predetermined social role: for Casanova, the libertine adventurer is also a

literary identity.

Despite Casanova's adherence to the episodic structure of the role-player memoir, his memoir betrays modern subjectivity through its appropriation of the Augustinian narrative of conversion: Casanova's smallpox conversion evokes interiority as space in which the modern individual is defined by emotion (Campe and Weber 1-2). Through his connection to Bettina, Casanova undergoes an inner emotional process that allows him also to assume the stance of the alienated Enlightenment subject. In the moment of conversion, the libertine role-player narrator is endowed with the awareness of his empowered individuality; at the same time, this empowered narrator also becomes aware of the inner selves that exist behind the masks of his lovers.

## **II. SMALLPOX AND THE POLITICAL MEMOIR: WILHELMINE VON BAYREUTH AND KATHARINA II**

### A. The Political Memoir and Modern Subjectivity

In the following chapter, I examine the ways in which smallpox imagery contributes to the degree of modern subjectivity in the political memoir, a form of autobiography that underwent transformation with the emergence of the public sphere. The memoirs of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth and Katharina II both represent the traditional courtly memoir that primarily records external political events; at the same time, both memoirs emphasize individual life experience characteristic of the middle-class literary discourse. In this chapter, I examine the ways in which smallpox escalates the level of modern subjectivity in the political memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, as well as the way in which smallpox creates a story of unique individual development in the political memoir of Katharina II.

The autobiography of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, while largely providing an observational account of courtly life, also betrays the modern subjectivity of the *kleinfamiliale Intimsphäre* (Habermas) through a private account of the Hohenzollern family. Wilhelmine's childhood smallpox illness emphasizes her personal reactions to her experiences in the *kleinfamiliale Intimsphäre*: as an inner bodily process, Wilhelmine's smallpox allows her a single opportunity to engage in a prolonged moment of inner reflection, during which she can express her personal feelings toward her arranged marriage as a theme of her personal life story, similar to how Bronner expresses the theme of self-emancipation in his

smallpox illness.

Similarly, the memoir of Katharina II, although based on an autobiographical form in which one's status as a political figure justifies the recording of one's life (the political memoir), also draws on the *Bildungsgeschichte* as an expression of universal middle-class individuality (the social role of the "Menschen' schlechthin" [Habermas 43]), according to which a story of unique individual development can be recorded for its own sake. In the memoir of Katharina II, smallpox immunity is invoked in order to construct a narrative arc of unique individual development: within the various observations of courtly and political life, Katharina constructs a story of the "[Individuum] auf seiner Bahn zur Reife und zur Harmonie" (Dilthey 121), in which the individual, rather than the political milieu, becomes the thematic focus.

In this chapter, I draw on Roy Pascal's definition of the political memoir as an observational autobiographical form; in contrast to the political memoir, Pascal defines the autobiography as a more modern form that emphasizes the individual. Pascal (*Design and Truth in Autobiography*, 1960) distinguishes the autobiography genre from the political memoir by asserting that the "dynamic 'I'" of the autobiography contrasts with "static" expressions of the "I" in the political memoir. According to Pascal, the "dynamic" narrator of autobiography constructs out of his or her life a "coherent story" that "establishes certain stages in an individual life, makes links between them, and defines, implicitly or explicitly, a certain consistency of relationship between self and outside world" (8 – 10). The political memoir, on the other hand, showcases a narrator that remains secondary to the "complex world



of politics” of his or her life: “[the author] appears as only a small element, fitting into a pattern, accomplishing a little here or there, aware of a host of personalities” with which he or she comes into contact (Pascal 6). The narrator of political memoir remains static as he or she observes the larger political circumstances that overshadow his or her personal experiences or subjective reflections: “it is as an observer that [the author] can make a unity of his experiences, not as an actor” (Pascal 6). As an observer of political circumstances, the narrator of political memoir eschews a life story of unique individual development.

Within the theoretical scope of my dissertation, the political memoir can also represent an upper-class literary form that existed prior to the emergence of middle-class literary subjectivity. Paul Delany’s *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century* (1969) elucidates the secular autobiographical production of seventeenth-century Europe, before the emergence of the modern literary subjectivity of the public sphere in the following century. As seventeenth-century autobiographers were still “inhibited [from] expressing themselves freely and directly,” the “autobiographical urge” was demonstrated mostly by members of the upper class who “were both more assertive in their daily affairs and more likely to have the experiences of travel, military command, or political office” (107-109). The objective narrative stance of observer associated with political memoir can also describe the upper-class autobiographical narrator who, in contrast to modern narratives of inner selfhood, is mandated by his or her privileged social position to write about the external circumstances of his or her life.

This chapter engages primarily with the eighteenth-century political memoir

as an upper-class autobiographical form that is also influenced by the literary subjectivity of the emerging bourgeois discourse. Rather than write autobiography “for its own sake,” Wilhelmine von Bayreuth and Katharina II are mandated by their personal involvements in courtly and political life to illustrate the political circumstances of their life: both assume the narrative role of observer in recording the political activities of the Prussian and the Russian court, respectively. At the same time, however, both autobiographies exhibit a level of modern subjectivity that complicates the observer narrator who “appears only as a small element” within a “complex world of politics.” The familial intimacy of the public sphere provides the narrative tone of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth’s memoir with the emotional depth of modern subjectivity: although the narrative remains static as she provides a record of the external events of her life, her involvement in familial conflicts invokes a sentimental and tragic tone that expresses inner emotional experience. Katharina II’s memoir, on the other hand, constructs a modern *Bildungsgeschichte* that presents a story of individual self-fulfillment as the author transforms into the great Russian empress: although she indeed observes the political circumstances of her life, the construction of a dynamic *Bildungsgeschichte* of an individual reveals a departure from the static narrator of the political memoir.

Literary scholars describe the autobiographies of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth and Katharina II as representative of a formalistic transition from the eighteenth-century courtly memoir into a more modern autobiographical form. Frank Piontek relates how, in 1838, the literary critic J.D.E. Preuß disregards accusations of the factual unreliability of Wilhelmine’s memoir and instead puts forward the progressive

theory that it closely resembles a novel (“die Memoirenschreiberin wird zur Verfasserin eines literarischen Romans” [341]). Similarly, Monika Greenleaf observes that the memoir of Katharina II, although written before the emergence of the modern autobiography demonstrating the “power of individual reasoning to overcome external obstacles,” nevertheless tactically “produces” her self-image as a “truthful” and unaggressive ruler in accordance with the “shifting literary practices” of the outgoing eighteenth century<sup>22</sup> (425). Similarly, Anja Tippner contends that Katharina’s memoir invokes the language of “feminine” emotionality and balances it with the language of “power” and “politics” (424).

The memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth (née Friedrike Sophie Wilhelmine 1709 – 1758) reveals itself to be both observational and subjective through its presentation of political conflicts as personal family dramas. Wilhelmine’s life story largely provides an observational illustration of courtly intrigues and the political actions of her parents, the Hohenzollern King Friedrich Wilhelm and his wife Queen Sophie Dorothea, as they attempt to marry her into power. At the same time, the prospect of her advantageous political marriage places her at the center of a private family conflict of modern emotional subjectivity: the political maneuvering of King Friedrich Wilhelm and Queen Sophie Dorothea regarding Wilhelmine’s betrothal, as well as the political intrigues of courtiers regarding the succession of the Prussian crown, represent a private family drama in which Wilhelmine has a personal stake.

Wilhelmine’s objective narrative role of observer of the Prussian court is

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<sup>22</sup> In accordance with the “modal shift” into domestic intimacy, Katharina’s memoir invokes the “verbal exchange” (reflecting the “exchange of letters”), as well as the “domestic space itself” as a “prop in the characters’ defenses and prosecutions” (Greenleaf 424).

counterbalanced by her subjective emotional responses to courtly intrigues and her politically advantageous betrothals to foreign monarchs. These emotional responses allow her to express herself as a tragic figure: she is both a victim of her circumstances, in which her destiny is controlled by the will of the King and Queen, as well as a blameworthy daughter, who fails to secure the power of her family through a successful marriage to the Prince of Wales (In the opening pages of her memoir, Wilhelmine laments when a fortune-teller informs her that “mein Leben nur eine Kette widriger Schicksale sein würde [...] ich [nie] einen König heiraten würde. Diese Prophezeiung erfüllte sich, wie wir später sehen werden” [Band I, 12]). In place of a king, Wilhelmine is wed to Friedrich von Brandenburg-Bayreuth in 1731; after eloping with Friedrich, Wilhelmine spends the rest of her life in Bayreuth, where she engages in a variety of cultural endeavors as a patron as well as an artist (in Bayreuth she founds a *Hofkapelle* and an Italian opera troupe, plays and composes music, translates operas and plays, and engages in other artistic endeavors, such as painting, philosophy, and art collecting. In 1835 she inherits the Ermitage, a wooded area near Bayreuth, from her father-in-law the Margrave of Brandenburg-Bayreuth; she transforms the Ermitage into an artistic and cultural center<sup>23</sup> [*Raumimagination und Selbstkonzept*, 239]).

Wilhelmine's childhood smallpox illness provides a key to understanding her personal emotional responses to the political events of her life. Wilhelmine

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<sup>23</sup> Müller-Lindenberg interprets Wilhelmine's artistic endeavors after her marriage as a deliberate attempt to achieve the highest degree of self-expression: owing to her relatively small responsibilities at the Bayreuth court, Wilhelmine found herself “in der Lage, ihren Interessen konzentriert und engagiert nachzugehen, und ihr Selbstkonzept bestand in dem Anspruch, die genannten Tätigkeiten auf möglichst hohem Niveau auszuüben” (*Raumimagination und Selbstkonzept*, 240).

contracts smallpox not long after a secret plan to wed her to the Prince of Wales falls through; during her illness, she undergoes an inner experience that allows her to confront her guilt about disappointing her father through her marital “failure.” In this singular moment, she overcomes her guilt, and momentarily renounces her emotional connections to her responsibilities of fulfilling her parents’ political aspirations. Wilhelmine’s moment of reflection allows her to more thoroughly articulate her tragic emotional reactions to family conflicts: her smallpox illness instantiates an inner process in which she can acknowledge and momentarily renounce the victimizing emotional connections to her family. Wilhelmine’s smallpox illness represents a singular moment in which the static narrative is interrupted by a prolonged period of subjective reflection: as a prolonged bodily experience of the individual, smallpox illness allows Wilhelmine to articulate an inner experience of emotional independence as an individual, however in the absence of a *Bildungsgeschichte* of individual growth.

The memoir of Katharina II (born Sophie von Anhalt-Zerbst, 1729 – 1796), on the other hand, constructs a modern *Bildungsgeschichte* of an individual’s growth. Katharina draws on the middle-class discourse of *Bildung* in order to illustrate the individual development of a unique figure of nobility. Paralleling Kittler’s notion of the “Sozializationsspiel” of the *Bildungsroman*, Katharina’s memoir presents a narrative of socialization constructed as self-fulfillment: Katharina becomes “socialized” into Katharina “die Große” within a narrative arc in which she fulfills the highest potential of her unique abilities as a ruler. Katharina’s memoir represents a story of her rise to power, as she incurs the favor of the

Russian Empress Elisabeth, and reveals herself to be a more capable ruler than her husband, Peter III, whom Katharina describes as a slovenly and combative drunkard (Katharina recalls her first meeting with Peter when they were children: “der junge Herzog neige zum Trunk [...] er sei störrisch und jähzornig” [Band I, 8]). In its presentation of a “Vorgeschichte des Helden” (Kittler)—a story that pointedly illustrates the great leader’s rise to power—Katharina’s memoir concludes when she obtains a private audience with the Empress Elisabeth, indicating that she has gained the Empress’s trust and respect: the Empress asks Katharina to divulge information about Peter’s ill behavior at court (“sie sagte dann zu mir: ‘Ich verlange, daß Sie mir über alles, was ich Sie fragen werde, die reine Wahrheit sagen’ [...] Dann fragte sie mich nach Einzelheiten über das Leben des Großfürsten” [Band I, 326]). Although Katharina mainly observes and records the political circumstances of her life without reflecting on them, these observations construct a narrative arc in which she finally earns the Empress’s confidence as the future ruler of Russia in place of Peter III.

Katharina’s childhood pleurisy illness represents a key moment in her *Bildungsgeschichte*. During her illness, Katharina undergoes an inner process through which she assumes control over her own destiny: in this moment, she transforms into the powerful personage who would eventually become “Katharina die Große.” As opposed to the other works analyzed in this dissertation, Katharina’s immunity to smallpox enables her to undergo this inner transformation. In

Katharina's memoir, smallpox is coded as a killer of nobility<sup>24</sup> and an obstacle to royal succession. When Katharina becomes ill as a child, she is confronted with the prospect that she has contracted smallpox; when her illness reveals itself to be pleurisy, however, Katharina reveals that she is immune to smallpox as a disease that kills members of the nobility before they can ascend to the throne. Katharina's empowerment through immunity is directly connected to the presence of *Bildung* in her memoir, as the theory of Johannes Türk (*Die Immunität der Literatur*, 2011) suggests: according to Türk, the subject's survival of the "crisis" of smallpox illness imbues her with a "natürliche Immunisierung" through which the author, within the context of the literary work, assumes control over his own destiny (112). As a modern literary subject, Katharina's survival of her near-fatal pleurisy illness—originally feared to be smallpox—represents a moment of immunization that allows her to construct a *Bildungsgeschichte* as a narrative of self-empowerment, one that eventually leads to her transformation into the great Russian Empress.

Katharina's immunity to smallpox also plays into her power struggle with Peter III as the prospective ruler of Russia: when Peter III contracts smallpox, Katharina manages to avoid it. Peter is feminized—and thereby disempowered—

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<sup>24</sup> The notion of smallpox as a killer of the nobility in Katharina's memoir is informed by class associations with the disease beginning around the late seventeenth century. Unlike other diseases, "smallpox disregarded class lines and attacked 'people of quality' just as ruthlessly. It was no consequence of poverty or distress, and collected a heavy toll even among the royal families of Europe [...] So prevalent was the disease among the upper classes that the notion was commonly held that the rich actually suffered more than the poor." An association of smallpox with the upper class was explained by the theory that the rich ruined their health through "luxury and intemperance," and also by the theory that they were "victims of their physicians" (Miller 33-34).

when he is tragically disfigured by the smallpox pustules; the fact that Katharina retains her beauty reveals that she is the more capable ruler.

#### B. Familial Intimacy in the Memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth

In the memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, the personal meets the political in illustrations of courtly intrigues; while these illustrations partly serve as an objective historical chronicle of the Hohenzollern family, they also reveal the subjective emotionality of an intimate familial conflict. Wilhelmine describes how Grumbkow, a minister of King Friedrich Wilhelm, and the Fürst von Anhalt plot to assassinate the King and take power over Prussia; the scene of this assassination attempt constitutes an emotionally charged family drama, in which the political conflict of royal succession is expressed through the King's antagonistic behavior toward his son, Friedrich II. The emotionality of the *kleinfamiliale Intimsphäre* of the public sphere allows Wilhelmine to personalize the political conflict of royal succession.

Wilhelmine's subjective description of Grumbkow departs from the observer narrator of the political memoir. In the opening section of her memoir, Wilhelmine briefly describes the character of the "Hauptpersonen am damaligen Hof in Berlin," namely the royal family and the court advisors (Band I, 3). Wilhelmine assesses Grumbkow as a constant schemer for the Prussian crown: although Grumbkow displays a winning personality at court, Wilhelmine reveals that "all [seine] schönen Aussenseiten verbergen ein tückisches, eigennütziges und verräterisches Herz. Sein Privatleben ist ein denkbar ungeregeltes, sein ganzer Charakter nur ein Gewebe von Lasten [...]" (Band I, 4). Wilhelmine's reference to a disparity between Grumbkow's



“pleasant exterior” (*schöne Aussenseiten*) and his corrupt “private life” (*Privatleben*) acknowledges his inner personality that is hidden by a fallacious exterior. Through this split between interior and exterior, Wilhelmine characterizes Grumbkow as a modern individual: his latent corrupt personality indicates a subjective consciousness that lies within the individual. While this characterization of Grumbkow generally indicates Wilhemine’s consciousness of modern subjectivity, her personal evaluation of Grumbkow expresses her own subjectivity through her personal opinion of a political figure: Wilhelmine’s impassioned description of Grumbkow’s corrupt inner self (“ein tückisches, eigennütziges und verräterisches Herz”) showcases her own adverse emotional responses to Grumbkow’s character, departing from the objective description of a political figure within a historical chronicle.

In an ensuing episode involving Grumbkow’s treachery, political intrigue constitutes a private familial conflict involving King Friedrich Wilhelm, Queen Sophie Dorothea, and their children. Grumbkow, along with the Fürst von Anhalt, decide to take advantage of Friedrich Wilhelm’s love of the theater in order to murder him and his son, and thereafter assume power in Prussia. After luring Friedrich Wilhelm and the young Friedrich II to the theater, they plan to set the theater on fire and strangle the King and the Prince amidst the chaos (Band I, 26-27). After hearing a rumor that a visit to the theater may not be safe, the Queen implores Friedrich Wilhelm not to go, while also encouraging her children Friedrich II and Wilhelmine to provide a distraction. Wilhelmine describes the scene in a dramatic fashion:

[Der] König [stand] auf und ging schon, seinen Sohn an der Hand führend, auf die Türe zu, als dieser sich zu sträuben und schrecklich zu schreien anfang. Der König, sehr verwundert, suchte ihn erst in Güte zu bereden, da es aber nichts half und das arme Kind ihm nicht folgen wollte, wollte er es schlagen. Die Königin widersetzte sich, allein der König hob ihn in seine Arme und wollte ihn mit Gewalt davontragen. Ich aber warf mich nun ihm nun zu Füßen und umschlang sie unter tausend Tränen. Die Königin stellte sich vor die Türe und beschwor ihn, heute im Schloss zu bleiben. (Band I, 27)

In this passage, the King's political ineptitude is translated into his shortcomings as a father. The King betrays a degree of obstinacy in insisting that he and his son attend the theater, despite the looming threat of assassination: the fact that the Queen must stage a distraction from his visit to the theater reveals that the King is unwilling to listen to the Queen's counsel regarding his safety as a political figure. The King's political ineptitude is rooted in his obstinate, unreasonable and violent personality, as he threatens to beat his son and causes his wife and daughter distress. Wilhelmine's description of her emotional distress, as she falls to the King's feet and weeps, expresses her personal sentiments regarding his personality flaws: the King's violent and belligerent behavior results in an intense and painful emotional reaction that draws the narrative observer perspective of political events inwards toward her emotional life. As a victim to her father's domestic brutality, Wilhelmine expresses a personal emotional struggle: the presence of this illustration of emotional struggle in her memoir represents a public display of a private experience within the context of the new literary subjectivity of the public

sphere (Habermas 66 – 67).

The private conflict between the King and his family also reflects a political power struggle of royal succession: the King's violence toward his son derives from his resentment toward him as a sickly child who may die before he can succeed to the throne and secure the Hohenzollern's hold of power (Wilhelmine writes: "mein Bruder zeigte sich [von] sehr zarter Konstitution. Seine Schweigsamkeit wie sein Mangel an Lebhaftigkeit gaben zu berechtigten Besorgnissen für sein Leben Anlass" [Band I, 7 – 8]). Wilhelmine describes the King's general animosity toward her brother: "meinen Bruder [...] konnte [der König] nicht leiden und malträtierte ihn, wo er seiner ansichtig wurde, so dass er ihm eine unüberwindliche Furcht einjagte, die sich bis ins Alter der Vernunft hinein erhielt" (Band I, 17). Wilhelmine's description of her brother's deep-seated fears ("eine unüberwindliche Furcht") as an adult suggests a private story of a child's psychological development at the hands of an abusive father. At the same time, the King's antagonistic behavior toward his son reflects their conflicted relationship within the context of the family's political power struggle. In the theater scene illustrated above, the King's violent behavior toward Friedrich II, as he threatens to beat him, intimates his frustration regarding the threat that the boy's ill health poses to the royal family: the fact that the King attempts to pull him out the door intimates the notion that Friedrich II is stubbornly acting against the King's wishes. Friedrich II's threat to the King's power manifests in a physical confrontation between a father and a son who refuses to do as he is told.

While Friedrich II threatens the family's power through an early death, this

threat also presents Wilhelmine with the responsibility of securing the family's power through a politically advantageous marriage. Friedrich's "fragile" (*zarte*) physical constitution encourages King Friedrich Wilhelm and Queen Sophie Dorothea to plan Wilhelmine's marriage to a monarch early on: for example, they arrange for Wilhelmine to marry the King of Sweden as soon as she turns twelve, however after considering the vast difference in age between Wilhelmine and the Swedish king, Friedrich Wilhelm and Sophie Dorothea decide to call the marriage off (Band I, 17). Wilhelmine's behavior in the theater scene described above constitutes an emotive response to her father's frustration regarding the conflict of royal succession: her emotional outpouring intimates her own responsibilities in placating the King's frustration regarding the danger that the sickly Friedrich II poses to the family's future. Her despair in this scene foreshadows her later smallpox episode, in which she expresses guilt for having "failed" in her marriage to the Prince of Wales, and for leaving her mother and brother at the mercy of her father's wrath ("'ich bin schuld,' sagte ich, 'an allem Kummer, den die Königin und mein Bruder zu leiden haben'" [Band I, 108]). Wilhelmine's pathetic appeal to her father to unarm her brother and to forgo his visit to the theater presents her as a sorrowful victim of her father's tyrannical will, as both a parent and a king; once again, this victimization places her inner emotional life at the thematic center of the episode.

### C. Wilhelmine's Smallpox Episode

Wilhelmine's smallpox episode constitutes an inner subjective experience that personalizes the theme of political marriage. The failed plot to wed Wilhelmine

to the Prince of Wales reveals her difficulty in fulfilling her political obligations to her family as a Hohenzollern princess; this difficulty is expressed as a personal emotional conflict in her smallpox episode. As a reaction to her father's disappointment regarding the failed marriage plot, Wilhelmine's smallpox episode expresses an inner process of renouncement of her guilt through both a prolonged illness experience, as well as a positive outcome of this experience: not only does Wilhelmine survive smallpox, she avoids the disfigurement of smallpox scars. Wilhelmine's smallpox illness represents a singular moment of inner reflection through which she is able to process her conflicted emotions pertaining to her political marriage, more specifically her guilt toward disappointing her mother and father, and her sorrow as a victim of her circumstances.

In the opening pages of her memoir, Wilhelmine alludes to a tragic personal sentiment within the context of her marital responsibilities. Wilhelmine expresses her subordination to the political interests of her family when describing the circumstances of her birth:

Die Kronprinzessin gebar am 3. Juli 1709 eine Prinzessin, die sehr ungnädig empfangen wurde, da alles leidenschaftlich einen Prinzen wünschte. Diese Tochter ist meine Wenigkeit. Ich erblickte das Licht zur Zeit, als die Könige von Dänemark und Polen in Potsdam waren, um den Bundesvertrag wider Karl XII. von Schweden zu unterzeichnen und die Wirren in Polen beizulegen. (Band I, 5)

The fact that Wilhelmine describes the moment of her birth as politically

auspicious—during a time in which a “federal treaty” (*Bundesvertrag*) is being signed in Potsdam—indicates that her role in life is to bring about political unity on an international scale. Under the auspices of the treaty, Wilhelmine’s birth foreshadows her future marital prospects to foreign nobility in order to forge alliances between the Hohenzollern and foreign powers. Despite this emphasis on her political role, Wilhelmine also expresses a personal sentiment regarding her “insignificance” (*Wenigkeit*) within the scope of her political responsibilities to her family, who desire a son with “passion” (*Leidenschaft*): she is born a daughter who cannot succeed to the crown upon the death of the King, and therefore secure the family’s power. Wilhelmine’s use of the word “Leidenschaft” imbues her parents’ disappointment in not having a son (Friedrich II is born later, in 1712) with a higher degree of emotionality. Wilhelmine’s birth creates negative feelings of disappointment within the family; these same negative feelings are also reflected in Wilhelmine’s guilt for having disappointed the King and the Queen, as she refers to herself as “meine Wenigkeit.” While her use of the word “Wenigkeit” generally reflects Wilhelmine’s subordination to the larger political events that she observes and records, it also draws attention to her inner emotional pain as a disappointment: as a daughter that wields less political power than a son, her political insignificance is also a cause for shame. In invoking this shame, however, Wilhelmine is simultaneously casting herself as a victim of her circumstances: she becomes a pitiful figure as she causes the King and Queen disappointment.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Other scholars see Wilhelmine’s tragic “Wenigkeit” as a key to understanding her artistic endeavors later in life. Cordula Bischoff (“Zur Kunstpolitik der Wilhelmine von Bayreuth,” 2014) sees her architectural planning of her Ermitage as a compensation for her

Wilhelmine expresses her personal emotional victimhood in combination with an impersonal narrative tone of a daughter who submits to her family's wishes; this dualistic identity reflects the boundary between the personal and the political in her memoir. Müller-Lindenberg recognizes a similar tension between the personal and the political in Wilhelmine's memoir: despite Wilhelmine's concentration on her objective roles ("Schwester," "Königstochter," "Künstlerin" and "Ehefrau") in a historical chronicle, Wilhelmine betrays modern subjectivity in her transmission between these roles: "Ja nachdem, welcher Aspekt hervorgehoben wird, wandelt sich die Physiognomie des historischen Portraits [*Die Hofopfer als Bühne des Lebens*, 2])."<sup>26</sup>

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victimization by the power politics that impede her from marrying the Prince of Wales, and eventually becoming the Queen of England: "wie zahlreiche andere hochadlige Damen vor ihr versuchte sie, die gewohnten, in ihrem Falle königlichen Standards in ihrer neuen Heimat zu etablieren [...] Wie in Hochadelkreisen üblich, erhielt [sie] ein eigenes Lustschloss, die *Ermitage* zum Geschenk, mit dessen Umgestaltung sie sofort begann und das zu ihrem bevorzugten Sommeraufenthaltort wurde" (74 – 76). Similarly, Irene Hegen ("Musikalische Verschlüsselungen. Autobiographische Spuren in den Kompositionen von Wilhelmine von Bayreuth," 2009) recognizes in Wilhelmine's musical composition clues to her tragic personal life: "Wilhelmine nutzte die Schriftlichkeit der Musik für Verschlüsselungen, wie sie auch in Romanen ihrer Zeit benutzt wurden, um reale Geschichten realer Personen für Insider an die Öffentlichkeit zu bringen. Für sie bedeutete das eine Auseinandersetzung mit jenen belastenden Erlebnissen, die sie den Memoiren nicht anvertrauen wollte (konnte)" (187). Wilhelmine's musical composition reveals her personal affections for the officer Hans Hermann von Katte, who was tragically executed by King Friedrich Wilhelm after he attempted to help Friedrich II escape from the "unmenschlichen Zucht seines Vaters." Hegen observes that "die jüngst gefundene Flötensonate Wilhelmines [...] trägt im ersten Satz die drei Notenbuchstaben aus Hans Hermann von Kattes Namen H A E wie ein Monogramm als Zielpunkte der Melodien" (194 - 195).

<sup>26</sup> In alignment with Müller-Lindenberg, Frank Piontek ("Zwischen Ideologiekritik und Genderforschung. Wilhelmine von Bayreuth im Urteil der Nachwelt," 2009) observes that in the nineteenth century, literary scholars began to recognize that Wilhelmine's memoir more readily expresses a personal story of inner life rather than a factual historical account: "das Bild [von Wilhelmine] ist zwiespältig, wenn nicht gar schizoid: einerseits Dulderin, andererseits tiefverwundet, *in summa* eine Autorin, die unterhalten will und um dieses Zweckes willen die Dinge durch ein Vergrößerungsglas anschaut, um sie verzerrt wiederzugeben" (341).

When Wilhelmine is twenty years old, she incurs the wrath of her father after a secret plot to wed her with the Prince of Wales fails; Friedrich Wilhelm's anger represents a highly personal moment of familial intimacy within the context of a political conflict. The marriage plot involves the Prince of Wales's secret journey to Germany where he can wed Wilhelmine. This plan is discovered by the King of England, who disapproves of the union, through leaked information from an English ambassador (Wilhelmine writes: "[...] das Schreiben Dubourgays machten diesen ganzen Plan zunichte und zwangten den König, die Forderung der Engländer zu erfüllen [...] Dies alles verschlimmerte nur mein Los" [Band I, 104]). The King reacts violently to the failed marriage plot; once again, a political conflict is depicted as a highly emotional family drama. Similar to the scene of Grumbkow's attempted assassination plot, King Friedrich Wilhelm is depicted as violent and emotionally abusive toward his children in a domestic setting. In his frustration that is exacerbated by a case of the gout (*Gichtschmerzen*), the King refers to Wilhelmine as "die englische Canaille" and Friedrich as "der Schuft von einem Fritz." Furthermore, in the agony of his gout, the King wishes his children to share in his discomfort and forces them "Dinge zu essen und zu trinken, die uns widerstanden oder die unsrer Konstitution zuwider waren," to the point that the children vomit. After Wilhelmine's sister confronts her father about his cruel dietary administrations, the King becomes enraged and acts violently toward Wilhelmine and Friedrich, throwing a plate at his son's head and chasing his daughter around in his wheelchair while trying to hit her with his crutch (Band I, 104 - 106).

Wilhelmine invokes her father's cruelty in order to emphasize her "loss" in



the failed marriage with the Prince of Wales as a personal and harrowing emotional experience within the context of familial intimacy: Wilhelmine is emphasizing her own emotional experiences as a victim of domestic violence. The fact that her father forces her to ingest disagreeable food, to the point that she vomits, conveys a parental mistreatment of a child through malnourishment. Similarly, the fact that Friedrich Wilhelm throws dishes at his children locates a scene of violence within a domestic space, in which family meals take place. Wilhelmine explicates her father's egregious acts of domestic violence in order to emphasize the unfair cruelty that she must endure within her marital circumstances: as a victim to her father's angered reaction to the failed marriage plot, she is expressing a subtle criticism for her responsibilities as a Hohenzollern princess who must marry into power, and the unfair cruelty she must endure at the hands of the King.

Directly after Wilhelmine von Bayreuth is attacked by her father, she shows the first signs of smallpox; her smallpox illness represents a physical manifestation of her emotional reaction to her father's brutality. Upon rejoining her father in his room after his outburst, she begins to feel ill and returns to her mother's room, where a servant informs her about her unusual appearance: "sie brachte mir einen Spiegel, und ich war sehr erstaunt, Gesicht und Hals voll roter Flecken zu finden; ich schrieb es der gehabten Aufregung zu und achtete nicht darauf" (Band I, 107). Wilhelmine's "excitement" (*Aufregung*) describes the intense emotional moment in which she faces her father's wrath. Wilhelmine's "red spots" (*rote Flecken*), resulting from this excitement, represent a highly emotional reaction to a family drama, in which her personal stake within the family's future intensifies the dynamic between

father and daughter, and makes her more susceptible to her father's anger. The fact that she is "astounded" (*erstaunt*) when she sees her appearance in the mirror reflects an emotional shock that is similar to her excitement. The shock of seeing the red spots in the mirror expresses the subject's sudden realization of an inner truth, a realization that initiates a process of inner reflection in her ensuing smallpox illness: Wilhelmine's mental shock regarding her father's behavior evolves into an inner process of renouncement of her guilt regarding her father's wishes. The fact that she receives this shock as she looks at her face in the mirror intimates that her emotional conflict with her father assumes a highly personal aspect: at the moment of reflection, Wilhelmine looks inward, toward herself.

At the beginning of her smallpox episode, Wilhelmine openly acknowledges her guilt for her failure to wed the Prince of Wales; this acknowledgement constitutes the initial step in her inner process of reflection and renouncement. In comforting her doting servants who fear for the Princess's life, Wilhelmine gives a sort of confession of her inabilities to appease the King and secure the well-being of her mother and brother:

[Wenn] ich Fräulein von Sonsfeld und meine gute Mermann weinend an meinem Bette sah, suchte ich sie zu trösten, indem ich ihnen sagte, dass ich von der Welt losgelöst sei und den Frieden finden würde, den mir niemand mehr rauben könnte. "Ich bin schuld," sagte ich, "an allem Kummer, den die Königin und mein Bruder zu leiden haben. Wenn ich sterben soll, so sagen Sie dem König, ich hätte ihn stets geliebt und geachtet; ich hätte mir nichts gegen ihn vorzuwerfen, so dass ich hoffe, er würde mich vor meinem Tode segnen

[...]” (Band I, 108)

As Wilhelmine is faced with death during her smallpox illness, her narrative role of “observer” becomes more personal. The prospect of Wilhelmine’s death enables her to express emotion as a sorrowful victim of life—in death she would be “freed” (*losgelöst*) from the world. Her sorrowful tone is connected to her guilt in failing to wed the Prince of Wales: Wilhelmine laments that she is to blame for all the “misery” (*Kummer*) that her mother and brother would have to suffer from the disgruntled King Friedrich Wilhelm. Wilhelmine’s failure to appease the King through an advantageous political marriage becomes the source of Wilhelmine’s personal shortcomings; in this moment, the political memoir becomes a tragic story of an individual’s failure. Wilhelmine’s guilt is complicated by the fact that she sees her father as an antagonistic source of conflict: aside from her acknowledgment of the misery that her brother and mother would have to face, Wilhelmine also expresses a subtle forgiveness for her father in her remark that she holds nothing against him (“ich hätte ihn stets geliebt und geachtet; ich hätte mir nichts gegen ihn vorzuwerfen”); this forgiveness reflects her acknowledgment that she is a victim of her father’s cruelty, as well as a victim to the circumstances of her life, in which her personal destiny is dictated by the political aspirations of the King. This subtle criticism of Friedrich Wilhelm attempts to elicit sympathy for Wilhelmine as a victim of her assigned political role in life, or her “insignificance” (*Wenigkeit*).

Directly after vociferating her apology to her mother and brother and her forgiveness of the King, Wilhelmine describes a prolonged experience of smallpox

sickness, through which she relates an inner emotional struggle. Smallpox, as an inner experience of sickness, expresses Wilhelmine's inner struggle with her guilt: "Ich schwebte vierundzwanzig Stunden zwischen Leben und Tod, worauf sich die Blattern bei mir zeigte" (Band I, 108). The highly dramatic tone of Wilhelmine's grappling with death parallels her previous emotional outpouring of guilt as she laments the misery she has caused her mother and brother, and expresses her desire that her father "bless" (*segnen*) her before she dies. At the high point of her smallpox illness, her struggle between life and death dramatizes her inner grappling with guilt: her struggle with death echoes the intensity of her emotional pain. Furthermore, Wilhelmine's outbreak of smallpox pustules signifies the presence of her inner emotional conflict: as an externalization of her inner sickness, her pustules represent an outward expression of this inner struggle. The surfacing of smallpox pustules symbolizes her open acknowledgement of her inner guilt for having created a miserable situation. Finally, by referring to her illness as a long period of time (twenty-four hours) in a single abbreviated phrase, the Wilhelmine assumes a certain narrative distance from her highly personal illness experience, and intimates an inner subjective experience that can only be discerned by the ill subject in crisis. This abbreviated phraseology deliberately alludes to the inexpressibility of Wilhelmine's smallpox illness, while the invoked inexpressibility of her inner smallpox experience conveys her inner emotional conflict in conjunction with her illness to be highly private.

Wilhelmine's recovery from smallpox represents a positive outcome of her inner emotional struggle. Wilhelmine describes her recovery in a positive tone:

[Alle], die mich sahen, waren der Meinung, dass, wenn ich davonkäme, ich traurig entstellt sein würde. Aber mein Laufbahn war noch nicht zu Ende, und ich war all den Schicksalsschlägen vorbehalten, von denen in diesen Memoiren die Rede sein wird. Dreimal hatte ich Rückfälle; waren die Blattern abgetrocknet, so brachen sie von neuem aus. Trotzdem blieben keine Narben zurück, ja, meine Haut war viel reiner geworden als zuvor. (Band I, 109)

The fact that Wilhelmine successfully avoids disfigurement from smallpox reflects a positive inner emotional state in which she has temporarily overcome her guilt. While the physical pain of smallpox expresses Wilhelmine's inner emotional pain, the manifestation of smallpox pustules, which can permanently disfigure the smallpox victim, intimates a lasting negative effect that Wilhelmine's failed marriage could potentially have on her emotional life: she could become literally scarred by the experience. The fact that Wilhelmine evades disfigurement ("keine Narben zurück") reveals that, in this particular textual moment, she has relinquished her guilt for having disappointed her father. Wilhelmine's unblemished face represents a momentary expression of a positive inner state: her inner self has not suffered the lasting effects of a disfiguring negative experience.

In Wilhelmine's memoir, the potential permanence of smallpox as a scarring experience attributes a sense of the crucial to her immediate reflective experience, however it does not provide a crucial moment in a story of individual growth. The survival of smallpox can represent a rite of passage in the autobiography of *Bildung* (such as that of Bronner) in which a new life trajectory is initiated by a crucial inner

experience; in the static memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, the avoidance of the permanence of smallpox scarring expresses a singular positive moment of inner reflection, however one that does not have a bearing on the representation of the self in the events that follow. Finally, Wilhelmine's unblemished face expresses a positive inner experience through an allusion to female beauty. In triumphing over her guilt, Wilhelmine manages to maintain her external beauty. Drawing the high value of female beauty as product of a "gendered economy of heterosexual desire" (Shuttleton 117), Wilhelmine's physical beauty signifies her newfound self-worth in liberation from her guilt. Ironically, Wilhelmine expresses her renouncement of her negative emotions regarding her arranged marriage by declaring herself to be beautiful and therefore still marriageable.<sup>27</sup>

Wilhelmine's momentary renouncement of her parents' political desires is expressed as a renewal of the self. In the above passage, Wilhelmine claims that her skin has become purer ("viel reiner [als] zuvor") in the experience: not only has she renounced her guilt, she has gained a new purer face. Wilhelmine's emotional renewal intimates a personal sense of independence from the political aspirations of

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<sup>27</sup> Within the scope of marriage politics of the eighteenth century, the maintenance of female beauty within a "gendered economy of heterosexual desire" is also linked with inoculation. Shuttleton cites Elizabeth's novel *The Delicate Distress* (1769) as an example of the female perspective on inoculation debates: "[dating] from the period when inoculation was starting to be widely accepted, the debate is not so much over basic safety and efficacy, but more over questions of familial authority and procedural etiquette" (171). Griffith's novel portrays the inner conflicts of women who feel obliged to have themselves inoculated in order to preserve their beauty and thereby please their husbands and family, however also feel apposed to the procedure (171). The notion that smallpox represents a danger to a woman's beauty is also present in the medical literature of the eighteenth century. The medical writer Christoph Wilhelm Hufeland warns his female readership against the charlatans who sell beauty-inducing products by invoking smallpox: "das Blattergift, das man nur auf die Haut streichen braucht, um durch und durch inficiert zu werden, mag statt tausend anderer Beweise dienen. Würden Sie nicht zurückschauern, wenn Ihnen jemand zur Erhöhung Ihrer Schönheit vorschläge, eine Portion Gift zu nehmen?" (85).

the King and Queen. Wilhelmine overcomes her guilt toward disappointing her father by becoming much purer than she had been previously; in this singular moment, she is effectively renouncing her emotional connections to her family responsibilities as a pawn of marriage politics. Despite Wilhelmine's renewal, however, she does not experience rebirth through the positive outcome of her smallpox illness, as the smallpox episode of Bronner's autobiography reveals. Within her static narrative, she retains the same position of submissive victimhood toward her parents regarding her arranged marriage after her illness takes place. Wilhelmine is eventually forced into a marriage with Friedrich von Brandenburg-Bayreuth 1731, after the hopes that she might marry the Prince of Wales are finally extinguished (a messenger travels to Potsdam and informs Wilhelmine that: "der Plan Ihrer Heirat mit dem Prinzen Wales ist Endgültig gescheitert" [Band I, 209]). After being threatened by her father with incarceration if she fails to submit to his wishes to marry the Prince Friedrich, Wilhelmine considers the benefits of her sacrifice. She tells the King's messenger:

Sie versprechen mir in Auftrag des Königs, dass er von nun an besser mit der Königin verfahren will, er sagt mir die Freiheit meines Bruders und den dauerenden Frieden in seinem Hause zu; diese drei Zusicherungen sind mehr als genügend, um mich zur Unterwürfigkeit zu bewegen, und würden mich zu größeren Opfern vermögen, wenn er es von mir erheischte. (Band I, 215-216)

In willfully submitting to the King, Wilhelmine secures the well-being of her

mother and brother in the face of her father's tyranny. The fact that Wilhelmine would be willing to make yet "greater sacrifices" (*größere Opfer*) for this price suggests that she accepts and embraces her submissive familial role, while at the same time acknowledging the unfairness of her submissiveness (*Unterwürfigkeit*). Wilhelmine's acceptance of her submissiveness in this passage echoes her earlier acknowledgement of her "insignificance" (*Weinigkeit*), and reveals that she has not undergone a significant inner change in the wake of her smallpox illness.

Rather than initiate a story of individual growth, Wilhelmine's smallpox illness allows her to reflect on her dissenting opinions regarding her personal role in family marriage politics, opinions that are acknowledged in other places in the text, however not allowed full expression. Shortly before her betrothal, Wilhelmine laments that her mother's sustained hopes to wed her to Prince of Wales betray her mother's indifference to her inner desires: "die Königin glaubte mein Glück zu machen, indem sie mich in England versorgte; doch hat sie dabei nie mein Herz befragt, noch wagte ich je, ihr meine wahren Gefühle hierüber auszusprechen" (Band I, 214 – 215). Wilhelmine's reference to her "true feelings" (*wahre Gefühle*) indicate an emotional depth regarding her arranged marriage, a depth that cannot easily be expressed in the more passive and observational narrative tone of her memoir. Wilhelmine's admittance to her true feelings indicates that these feelings do exist, however within the static memoir of external observation these feelings can only be referred to briefly and in passing. Wilhelmine's smallpox illness allows her the opportunity to process her emotions, and then momentarily renounce her emotional struggle, as well as her familial and political responsibilities as the cause



of this struggle: the positive outcome of her smallpox illness—her survival, as well as the unblemished face that appears purer than before—indicates that she accepts the “strokes of fate” (*Schicksalsschläge*) of her life as an overpowering force to which she owes no allegiance. Her positive survival of smallpox allows her a moment in which she can fully express a final emotional reconciliation with her tragic emotional reactions to her political marriage. Her smallpox illness allows her to “speak out” her true feelings (“meine wahren Gefühle [auszusprechen]”) toward her arranged marriage, and to momentarily renounce her emotional attachments to it.

#### D. Katharina II and Smallpox Immunity

Katharina’s childhood pleurisy illness represents the moment in which she reveals herself to be immune to smallpox. In Katharina’s memoir, smallpox is coded as an obstacle to her rise to the throne. In the opening pages, Katharina explains that Peter III (Empress Elisabeth’s nephew) becomes heir to the throne of Russia after his older brother, who was originally engaged to the Empress, dies of smallpox (“einige Wochen nach der Verlobung starb der Prinz an den Pocken” [Band I, 8]). Katharina becomes engaged to Peter as a child, and in 1744 she relocates with her mother to Moscow from her home in Stettin (she marries Peter the following year, in 1745 [Band I, 9]). The fear that Katharina has contracted smallpox intimates the fear that she, like the older brother of Peter, will die before she can attain the throne. Katharina’s childhood pleurisy episode allows her to express immunity to smallpox by eliminating it as a threat; furthermore, her prolonged pleurisy illness parallels Türk’s smallpox crisis, through which the subject becomes empowered by a natürliche Immunisierung and assumes control over her own destiny. Katharina’s

survival of her crisis expresses her immunity through an exchange of mothers: Katharina disowns her natural mother, who vocalizes the fear that Katharina has contracted smallpox, in exchange for the Empress Elisabeth as her new mother who would lead her down her life's path and eventually enable her to assume the Russian throne.

Not long after arriving in Moscow, Katharina shows the first signs of pleurisy ("am dreizehnten Tage bekam ich eine Brustfellentzündung, die mich beinahe hingerafft hätte" [Band I, 14]); the beginning stages of Katharina's pleurisy illness present the risk of smallpox, as her illness evolves into a "high fever" (*starkes Fieber*) and "unbearable side pains" (*unerträgliche Seitenschmerzen*), two typical symptoms of smallpox (Band I, 14). When Katharina's pleurisy episode begins, her mother, fearing smallpox, refuses to let the doctors let blood: "sie glaubte, ich würde die Pocken bekommen [...] Die Aerzte behaupteten, man müsse mir zur Ader lassen, sie aber verweigerte ihre Zustimmung, weil man, wie sie sagte, durch Aderlass ihren Bruder in Russland an den Pocken habe sterben lassen, und sie wolle nicht, dass mir dasselbe geschähe" (Band I, 9). Once again, smallpox is evoked as a killer of nobility in the death of Katharina's uncle. The fear that Katharina has also contracted smallpox intimates that she, not long after having relocated to Russia where she will wed the heir to the Russian throne, has been marked by death before she can rise to power: smallpox is coded as a stroke of ill-fortune in the destiny of royal personages. At the same time, this correlation of smallpox and destiny is counteracted by an application of reasonable action: Katharina's true risk of death lies not in smallpox, rather in her mother's refusal to allow the doctors to let blood

in fear that she has contracted smallpox. In the reality of her pleurisy episode, Katharina requires that the doctors let blood in order for her to survive. Katharina's mother represents the unfounded fear that Katharina is not destined to assume the Russian throne—the obstacle in Katharina's path to power is expressed through the irrational fear of her mother.

Katharina's immunity to smallpox is revealed when the Empress Elisabeth appears on the scene and corrects the mother's mistake. While Katharina has become unconscious, the Empress, who has returned from a visit to the Troïza-Kloster, orders the doctors to let blood:

Endlich, am Sonabend um sieben Uhr, das heißt am fünften Tag meiner Krankheit, kehrte die Kaiserin [zurück], und so, wie sie ihre Karosse verlassen hatte, kam sie in mein Zimmer und fand mich ohne Bewußtsein vor [...] nachdem sie die Meinung der Ärtzte angehört hatte, setzte sie sich selbst ans Kopfende meines Bettes und befahl, mich zur Ader zu lassen. In dem Augenblick, als das Blut kam, kehrte mein Bewußtsein zurück, und wie ich die Augen öffnete, sah ich mich in den Armen der Kaiserin, die mich gehalten hatte. (Band I, 15)

The fact that the Empress Elisabeth seeks the advice of the doctors indicates that she is a more reasonable mother than Katharina's natural mother, Johanna Elisabeth von Holstein-Gottorf. In this moment, the Empress becomes the role model for the great leader that Katharina would one day become. In choosing the more reasonable treatment of blood-letting in order to heal Katharina's pleurisy, the

Empress eliminates the threat of smallpox as a groundless fear; simultaneously, the notion of smallpox as a stroke of ill-fortune in Katharina's destiny is nullified by reasonable action: Katharina's life is saved by an active and fearless implementation of medical reason. Katharina's survival of smallpox is predicated on a preference for the individual's reasonable and clear-minded action over one's more passive relationship to destiny, to which one is powerless, such as in the random case of a smallpox illness. The fact that smallpox arrives spontaneously—as an arbitrary punishment of God—underscores Johanna Elisabeth's fear of destiny as death-bringing force to which one is powerless; by the same token, the Empress Elisabeth's insistence that Katharina have her blood let marks the Empress as a modern individual who does not subscribe to the fatalistic view that smallpox constitutes God's punishment and cannot be avoided.<sup>28</sup> Katharina's pleurisy illness allows her to assume an empowered stance over her destiny through an exchange of her natural mother for the Empress Elisabeth, who saves Katharina through the reasonable action of blood-letting, and thereby initiates her into her new life of enlightened self-determination. The fact that Katharina temporarily wakes from her illness in the Empress's arms intimates that she is reborn into this new life: like a newborn baby, she first glimpses the world in the arms of her new mother.

Katharina's survival of a prolonged pleurisy crisis allows her to assume immunity to destiny as an overpowering force and thereby construct a *Bildungsgeschichte* of self-fulfillment. After the return of the Empress and the

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<sup>28</sup> Anja Schonlau (*Syphilis in der Literatur*, 2005) observes that smallpox, along with leprosy, constitutes a model for the cultural construction of syphilis as a "göttliche Strafe" and as "eine göttliche Vergeltungsmaßnahme für die allgemeine Sündhaftigkeit des Menschen" (47).

administration of the blood-letting procedure, Katharina relates a suspended period of time in which she undergoes an inner struggle: “siebenundzwanzig Tage schwebte ich zwischen Tod und Leben” (Band I, 15). While this temporal illustration, like the similar one in Wilhelmine’s smallpox episode, deliberately alludes to a highly private illness experience that cannot be perceived by the reader, it also emphasizes the inner struggle—the “swaying” (*schweben*) between life and death—as a highly subjective inner crisis that the narrator must overcome in order to obtain immunity. The experience of crisis is central to immunity. According to Türk, the modern novel as presents a “process of crisis” (*Krisenprozess*) that the protagonist undergoes in order to express himself or herself as an immune master of destiny:

Es ist der Roman, der die exemplarische Artikulation eines Krisenprozesses und seiner immunisierenden Wirkung bereitstellt, durch die eine imaginäre Prophylaxe möglich wird. Ihre Wirkung formt ein immunes Selbst, das in der Lage ist, den Zumutungen des Lebens mit einer Form der Kontrolle zu begegnen, die lange Zeit hindurch Bildung genannt wurde. Der Bildungsprozess, dem dieser Roman seine kanonische Form gibt, ist daher eine Kopie der Struktur der natürlichen Immunisierung. (Band I, 112)

Drawing on the medical discourse of smallpox immunity through inoculation, Türk describes illustrations of smallpox episodes as an “imaginary prophylaxis” (*imaginäre Prophylaxe*) for the literary subject who survives the smallpox crisis, and thereafter becomes immune within the course of his or her “Bildungsprozess.” In

exemplifying the smallpox crisis of the novel, Türk (like Emery) cites the scene from *La Nouvelle Héloïse* in which Saint-Pereux freely infects himself with smallpox by kissing Julie, his lover. According to Türk, both lovers' survival of smallpox indicates the "immune self" as a "form of control" over destiny: "die beiden überleben [die] Pocken—trotz der Mißachtung der medizinischen Regeln für die Variolisation" (14). While Türk refers to the novel as the primary form of the literary "Krisenprozess," the memoir of Katharina II—which also draws on the bourgeois discourse of *Bildung*—also represents this process of crisis as a pinnacle moment in her *Bildungsgeschichte*. While a singular illness crisis is represented in Katharina's prolonged struggle between life and death for "twenty seven days" in which her survival is uncertain, she attains immunity when, in the midst of this crisis, it is confirmed that her illness is not smallpox, as her mother had originally feared: Katharina finally awakens from her crisis after an abscess is opened ("ich brach ihn aus, und von den Augenblick an kehrte mein Bewußtsein zurück" [Band I, 15]), proving that her illness had not been smallpox. For Katharina, the smallpox crisis is an imaginary one, embodied by a fear of death—and a fear of destiny—that needs to be overcome. The fact that Katharina obtains the Empress as her new mother in this moment indicates that her new "immune self" (*immunes Selbst*) would eventually evolve into the Empress of Russia. Like the novel, Katharina's memoir assumes the form of an imaginary prophylaxis as it relates a narrative of individual self-fulfillment in the absence of destiny as a formidable force to which the subject must submit.

Katharina's narrative of self-determination corresponds with her public

image of a proactive enlightened ruler. Katharina's founding of the Hermitage in 1764, for example, marks her role as a unique innovator of Enlightenment culture in Russia: "a self-styled Minerva, the goddess of wise council and the arts, Catherine single-handedly gathered a major collection in record time, encouraged theatrical performances through personal example, and fostered an atmosphere of polite sociability in her Hermitage salon" (Dianina 631). Aside from her innovations in Russian cultural life, Katharina II also administered progressive government policies—or "experiments in enlightened governing"<sup>29</sup>—that mark her as a singular cultural figure of Enlightenment reform. Katharina's ability to determine her own destiny within her memoir corresponds with her public image as a unique and innovative figure of the Russian Enlightenment.

#### E. Katharina's Power Struggle with Peter III

Katharina's smallpox immunity contributes to the narrative of her rise to power by revealing her to be a stronger and more capable leader than her husband, Peter III (who is meant to assume the Russian throne after the death of Empress Elisabeth). Katharina's survival of her pleurisy crisis attests to her health and strength, and reveals her potential to be a strong and enduring leader; this attestation of strength and health is juxtaposed with Peter's sickly constitution. Upon meeting her future husband for the first time as a child, Katharina draws attention to Peter's sickly appearance: "er [hatte] ein kränkliches und ungesundes

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<sup>29</sup> Katharina's experiments included "calling together an assembly of delegates to draw up a law code for Russia, establishing a system of schools, reforming the administration of the country, and alternately tolerating, encouraging, and censoring the expansion of publishing and the development of Russian intellectual life" (Dawson 68).

Aussehen [...] Und in der Tat, er war blass, ausserordentlich mager und von schwächlicher Konstitution" (Band I, 3 – 4). This unsavory description of Peter as sickly, and therefore physically inferior, parallels his general disagreeable characterization that Katharina provides in revealing herself to be the superior ruler. Katharina, for example, blatantly refers to her husband as a liar while noting that she has always told the truth: "ich war stets bestrebt, der Wahrheit in allem immer so nahe wie möglich zu kommen. Er dagegen entferte sich täglich mehr und mehr von ihr und wurde schließlich ein ausgesprochener Lügner" (Band I, 253). Katharina's moral superiority over Peter, as one who always tells the truth, parallels her physical superiority over him, as one who in place of a "weak constitution" (*schwächliche Konstitution*) possesses a strong, hale constitution that allows her to survive the prolonged struggle between life and death during her pleurisy illness.

Katharina reveals herself to be superior over Peter when he contracts smallpox and she, once again, reveals herself to be immune. In early 1745, a year after Katharina's arrival at the Russian court, Peter comes down with smallpox while he and Katharina are travelling, and Katharina is sent to Petersburg in order to avoid a contraction. When Peter returns to Petersburg in the wake of his smallpox sickness, Katharina describes her appalled reactions to his scarring:

[...] ich [erschrak] beinahe, als ich den Grossfürsten sah, der sehr gewachsen, aber im Gesicht fast unkenntlich geworden war. Seine Züge waren gröber geworden, das Gesicht war noch ganz geschwollen, und man sah, daß er mit sicherheit blatternarbig bleiben würde. Weil man ihm die Haare abgeschnitten hatte, trug er eine gewaltige Perücke, die ihn noch mehr



entstellte. Er trat zu mir und fragte, ob es mich nicht Mühe koste, ihn wiederzuerkennen. Ich stammelte einen Glückwunsch zu seiner Genesung, aber er war wirklich abschreckend geworden. (Band I, 31)

Smallpox immunity allows Katharina to take Peter's place as a male ruler through a gender role reversal: Peter's hideously disfigured face disempowers him by feminizing him. In the eighteenth century, smallpox was considered to be a threat to female beauty: Shuttleton (*Smallpox and the Literary Imagination*, 2007) observes that, in eighteenth-century medical writings, "there is indeed a blatant gender asymmetry in the narrative attention accorded to the social impact of smallpox scarring, with by far the bulk of the material addressing the loss of beauty being directed specifically at the figure of the young, marriageable woman" (117). As a disease that ruins feminine beauty, smallpox devalues Peter through the discourse of feminine beauty, as he becomes "course" (*grob*) and "frightening" (*erschreckend*) in appearance. By the same token, Katharina's disgust upon seeing her disfigured husband empowers her as a male ruler within the context of her autobiography: in rejecting the ruined Peter III, Katharina II exercises the male monarchical privilege of choosing one's lover, one in which Peter had previously exhibited through his constant womanizing (Katharina describes how Peter's feasts were attended by disreputable women: "er lud dazu nicht nur die Sängerinnen und Tänzerinnen seiner Oper ein, sondern auch viele bürgerliche Damen [aus] sehr schlechten Kreisen" [Band I, 262]). By exhibiting her ability to reject her husband based on his repulsive appearance, Katharina is demonstrating a power of choice usually

attributed to the male monarch; she thereby asserts herself as the future ruler of Russia, as opposed to the ruler's wife. Ruth Dawson observes that, following the death of her husband, Katharina "[arrogated] to herself the same right to take lovers as most male monarchs used [...] it is as if Catherine underwent a public sex change halfway through her life" (Dawson 73). Dawson's allusion to a "public sex change" underscores the notion that, in her public display of courtship, Katharina was consciously crafting her public image as a strong masculine ruler.

Katharina's superiority over Peter, expressed through smallpox immunity, also allows her to incur favor with the Empress. Peter's defeat by smallpox is expressed during his birthday dinner with Empress Elisabeth, which his shame inhibits him from attending and thereby fulfilling his royal duties. Katharina II explains that, in the absence of the prince, the Empress

[...] dinierte mit mir allein auf dem Throne; der Großfürst erschien an diesem Tag und auch lange später noch nicht öffentlich. Man hatte es nicht eilig, ihn in dem Zustand zu zeigen, in den ihn die Pocken versetzt hatten. Die Kaiserin war während dieses Dinners sehr gnädig zu mir. Sie sagte zu mir, die russischen Briefe, die ich ihr [geschrieben] hatte, hätten ihr große Freude gemacht [...] und es sei ihr bekannt, dass ich mir große Mühe gäbe, die Landessprache zu erlernen. Sie sprach Russisch mit mir und wünschte, ich sollte ihr auch in dieser Sprache antworten. Ich tat das auch, und sie war so gnädig, meine gute Aussprache zu loben. Dann gab sie mir zu verstehen, ich sei seit meiner Krankheit in Moskau sehr viel hübscher geworden. (Band I, 32)

The fact that Katharina II dines with the Empress shows that she has proven herself immune to smallpox and thereby deserving of the Empress's favor, unlike her husband, who is too ashamed to be seen by the Empress. While Peter III has become hideously disfigured from smallpox, in the Empress's eyes Katharina II has grown yet prettier. While this positive observation on the part of the Empress generally indicates her favor of Katharina, it also imbues Katharina with a superiority over Peter within the context of feminine beauty. Shuttleton explains that "a woman courtier left badly scarred [from smallpox] felt obliged to permanently remove herself from court or at the very least resort to wearing a mask" (Band I, 118); Peter's absence implies that he is too ashamed to show his hideous face at court, and intimates his inferiority to the beautiful Katharina. Furthermore, the fact that the empress comments on Katharina II's excellence in the Russian language—and even speaks Russian with her—indicates a further aspect of her narrative of "transformation" into the great Russian Empress: she has begun to speak the language of her new life as Russian matriarch. The fact that the Empress makes this remark in the absence of the shamed Peter III foreshadows Katharina's future leadership abilities in the absence of her husband's leadership at court.

Peter's absence of leadership at court justifies Katharina in usurping the throne from him in 1762, not long after his coronation the year before. Although Katharina does not write about the affair in her memoir, Peter is arrested by officers of the Guard's regiment (*Garderegiment*) loyal to Katharina, imprisoned in Oranienbaum, and forced to abdicate (Band I, 378). In her memoir, Katharina provides a justification for her eventual usurpation. In 1757, shortly before the birth

of her daughter Anna Petrovna, Katharina openly acknowledges her desire to save her family and Russia from her husband's poor leadership: "es handelt sich darum, entweder mit ihm oder durch ihm unterzugehen oder aber mich selbst, meine Kinder und vielleicht auch das Reich aus dem Schiffbruch zu retten, dessen Gefahr alle moralischen und physischen Eigenschaften dieses Fürsten voraussehen ließen" (Band I, 280). The tensions between Peter and Katharina escalate as Peter begins an affair with the Countess Woronzowa, and then attempts to hinder Katharina from appearing publicly at a new comedy, where he wishes to socialize with Woronzowa (Band I, 300); in the public eye, Peter's behavior constitutes a humiliation to Katharina and an affront to her within their courtly power struggle (Katharina complains about Peter's dismissal of her allies from the Russian court, the "Verbannungen und Entlassungen mehrerer meiner Leute, und immer gerade jener, die mir am meisten ergeben waren" [Band I, 309]).

At the end of the memoir, the Empress Elisabeth is called upon to intercede in the power struggle between Peter and Katharina; the memoir's final lines describe the Empress's appeal to Katharina to divulge details about Peter's private life ("dann fragte sie mich nach Einzelheiten über das Leben des Großfürsten"), indicating a final confirmation of her confidence in Katharina as the true future ruler of Russia. Katharina's Bildungsgeschichte ends at a moment when the Empress, in asking Katharina to confide in her, finally expresses her opinion that Katharina is the more capable ruler, and that Peter is not to be trusted. This final confirmation justifies her later usurpation of Peter, as well as her previously stated intention to save her family and the Russian kingdom from the "shipwreck" (*Schiffbruch*) of

Peter's leadership. Katharina's memoir constructs the story of her attainment of power through her personal integrity as a ruler: as a noble figure who always speaks the truth, Katharina possesses a certain invincibility that allows her to conquer the obstacles on her path to the throne—namely the threat of smallpox illness, or the intrigues of her husband. Katharina's smallpox immunity, while allowing her to overcome ill-fortune, also indicates her unique virtues as a strong and honest ruler, and reflects the modern *Bildungsgeschichte* as a story of unique individuality.

#### F. Conclusion

As a literary work that rests on the boundary between the personal and the political, the memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth reveals insight into female subjectivity within literary discourse of the eighteenth century. Wilhelmine's narrative role of observer derives from a subordination to the political circumstances of her life, as well as her responsibilities in sustaining her family's power through a politically advantageous marriage; this same subordination articulates her relationship to marriage as a patriarchal power structure: as a disempowered woman, Wilhelmine must submit to her destiny. The fact the Wilhelmine calls attention to her destiny in her story of political marriage both acknowledges her subordinate role within the patriarchal system, as well as provides a subtle criticism for it: her "insignificance" is both an acknowledgment of the overpowering circumstances of her life, as well a criticism of it through her victimhood to it. Wilhelmine's sentiment is complicated yet further by the fact that she feels guilty about her failure to wed the Prince of Wales: her admission of guilt

reveals a psychological alliance with the patriarchal system that overpowers her. Considering Weigel's perspective that *Frauenliteratur*, as a patriarchal construct, reflects the influences of patriarchy on the "gesellschaftliche und individuelle Realität von Frauen" (83), Wilhelmine's conception of reality constitutes a complex mixture of her guilt, as well as her acknowledgment of her victimhood to her circumstances.

Wilhelmine's smallpox illness allows her to confront these conflicting feelings and to temporarily renounce them: her revived state in the wake of smallpox derives from her banishment of the conflicting emotions between guilt and victimhood assigned by patriarchy. As an observational memoir of the early eighteenth century, Wilhelmine's memoir does not betray prolonged moments of self-reflection; however, the familial intimacy of the public sphere allows her to address her conflicting emotions, while her smallpox episode, as a prolonged bodily experience, allows her to process them—the end result of this inner process is a singular moment in which she defies her subordination to the patriarchal forces that control her life.

The memoir of Katharina II can be evaluated according to historical associations of gender with the concept of *Bildung*, as the individual's development into a role of social agency was designated primarily to men. In contrast to the memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, that of Katharina II reveals a pronounced degree of agency for a female narrator within the life story of a dynamic and progressive ruler. In the memoir of Katharina II, the *Bildungsgeschichte*, through its associations with male agency, constitutes a challenge to the passive female voice

such as that seen in the memoir of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth. A sense of male self-mastery associated with Bildung allows Katharina to cultivate her public image as the strong and masculine ruler of Enlightenment Russia in her memoir: as opposed to Wilhelmine von Bayreuth, who ultimately remains subordinate to her political marriage as a patriarchal power structure, Katharina II presents a domination of her surroundings in presenting the story of the rise of a powerful ruler. While Wilhelmine von Bayreuth relates a singular moment in which she can express a renouncement of guilt assigned by patriarchy, Katharina II's story of Bildung is much more pronounced as a story of male individuality: Katharina II's immunity to smallpox, through which she overcomes obstacles to throne, designate her to be an obvious hero of her own life story in alignment with the patriarchal Bildungsroman. Katharina's memoir reveals that the empowerment of the unique self, prevalent in the Bildungsgeschichte of individual self-fulfillment, is the empowerment of the male subject in a patriarchal scheme.

#### IV. SMALLPOX AND THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SELF-REFLEXIVITY: GOETHE AND JOHANNA SCHOPENHAUER

##### A. Smallpox, Inoculation and Self-Reflexivity in the Modern Autobiography

In the last chapter of my dissertation, I investigate smallpox in the autobiography of self-reflexivity as the autobiographical form in which modern subjectivity is the most pronounced. The autobiographies of Goethe and Johanna Schopenhauer both betray a heightened awareness of the individual as having the potential for growth throughout the course of life, as well as throughout the course of history. In the Enlightenment discourse of Bildung, the individual becomes the focal point of historical progress as he discovers and expresses inner truth in a life process of education (in Enlightenment thought, the education of the individual becomes the key to a broader education of humanity [“das ganze Menschengeschlecht”] at large [Lessing 75 -79]). The autobiographies of Goethe and Schopenhauer both express an awareness of the centrality of the individual within the discourse of Bildung. At the same time, however, Goethe and Schopenhauer express differing attitudes toward Bildung: while Goethe, in his *Bildungsgeschichte*, traces the individual self as a historical object that is privy to change throughout the various stages of his life, Schopenhauer’s autobiography does not trace the self as a historical object, rather it formulates the unique self as an independent entity that exists outside the discourse of Bildung.

In *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe relates how he becomes aware of himself as a historical object within the narrative of his artistic development. Goethe’s



smallpox illness expresses the initial moment in which he sees himself as an object of continual artistic growth; his life story then illustrates a series of moments of the individual's inner growth that propel historical progress. Goethe's status as an iconic figure of German history underscores his *particular* life process of self-cultivation as a representation of Enlightenment historical progress. In depicting his status as iconic German author, Goethe presents his self-development as a process of artistic cultivation: Goethe's *Bildungsgeschichte* traces the development of his artistic sensibilities, and these sensibilities have, in turn, had an immense impact on German cultural history. Goethe's self-portrayal as an iconic cultural figure resonates with Herder's promotion of autobiographical portraits of "great men" as leaders of a new "human culture" (*menschliche Kultur*) near the end of the eighteenth century. Herder encouraged scholars to collect the most "outstanding self-writings from countries and times" (Misch 4), while his own collection *Briefe zu Beförderung der Humanität* (1793-97) offers up self-writings of "great men" as an opportunity for readers to take part in the "spirit" of a unified human culture through the thoughts and experiences of humanity's leaders (5 - 6).

Similar to Goethe, Schopenhauer betrays an awareness of the individual as an object of *Bildung* and the focal point of Enlightenment progress. For Schopenhauer, however, *Bildung* represents a *potential* for self-cultivation from which she is excluded. Though Schopenhauer was also a popular author in her lifetime,<sup>30</sup> her

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<sup>30</sup> Schopenhauer was known for her travelogues (namely the two-volume collection *Erinnerungen von einer Reise in den Jahren 1803, 1804 und 1805*, published 1813/1814), as well as her collection of novels *Gabriele* (1819), *Die Tante* (1823), and *Sidonia* (1827), which awarded her great literary fame in her lifetime (Weber 20 – 21). Schopenhauer was also famous for her salon in Weimar during the highpoint of Weimar Classicism; her salon

autobiography rather depicts a self whose growth becomes stymied by the patriarchal institutions of historical progress. Schopenhauer's life story is not a process of development that expresses an historical evolution in culture, rather her sense of individuality arises from her awareness of her exclusion from historical progress. Within the narrative structure of her autobiography, Schopenhauer's childhood inoculation procedure signifies the moment in which she becomes excluded from the *Bildungsgeschichte* of the modern enlightened individual: as a physically "paralyzing" procedure, Schopenhauer is blocked from a narrative of self-cultivation, and therefore also blocked from constructing a narrative of historical progress in the vein of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*.

In analyzing the autobiographies of Goethe and Schopenhauer from the standpoint of their awareness of the self as an object of *Bildung*, I implement the term "self-reflexivity." Goethe and Schopenhauer's self-reflexive narrative stance bears a resemblance to Romantic subjectivity, which emphasizes the author's self-reflection in the act of poetic expression: the poetic act of Romanticism involves a splitting of the self between the "depicting" agent and the unique artistic consciousness that becomes "depicted," resulting in a reflective self-awareness.<sup>31</sup> In this chapter, self-reflexivity describes the narrative stance assumed by Goethe, who reflects back upon the development of the self as a historical progression, or by

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represented "eine gesuchte Stätte anspruchsvoller Geselligkeit in der klassischen Zeit Weimars," and was frequented by Goethe and Wieland (Weber 5 – 6).

<sup>31</sup> Articulating his thoughts on Romantic poetry, Schlegel describes a split in the author's consciousness between the "depicting" agent and what is "depicted" (the *dargestellten* and the *darstellenden*): "[romantische Poesie] kann sich so in das Dargestellte verlieren, dass man glauben möchte, poetische Individuen jeder Art zu charakterisieren [...] und doch gibt es noch keine Form, die dazu so gemacht wäre, den Geist des Autors vollständig Auszudrücken (Schlegel 52)."

Schopenhauer, who reflects back upon the self as separate from the development of history. Through their self-reflexive narrative, both Goethe and Schopenhauer define their unique self in relation to a historical evolution: Goethe's unique Bildungsgeschichte expresses the progression of German history during the outgoing eighteenth century, while Schopenhauer's unique self arises from her exclusions from the "progressive" culture of the Enlightenment.

In this chapter, I investigate how illness recovery plays a key role in propelling Goethe's self-reflexive Bildungsgeschichte of artistic growth. Goethe's artistic sensibilities evolve through periodic moments of Bildung, in which he undergoes inner growth during recovery from illness. During Goethe's childhood smallpox illness, he is first exposed to the "Übel" as a catalyst of inner intellectual and artistic growth: Goethe's horrific smallpox illness brings about his anxious realization that he will suffer further horrors in the future; this realization, in turn, introduces illness recovery as the simultaneous recovery of a clear and harmonious mental state, as he returns to health and the anxiety of the Übel subsides (throughout *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe continually implements the term "Übel" to describe this anxious mental state). Goethe's self-awareness as independently susceptible to the Übel initiates his self-reflexive Bildungsgeschichte: he is now aware that future confrontations with the Übel will take place, and that he will grow as he continually regains a clear and harmonious mental state. For Goethe, the regaining of a healthy mental state signifies the growth of his unique self by first making him aware of his artistic talents, and then by cultivating these talents, as he hones his sensitivity to the clarity and harmony associated with Classicism and

interacts with fellow intellectuals and artists. After his childhood smallpox illness, Goethe's subsequent recoveries from bouts of love sickness, and from a hemorrhage that inflicts him in the aftermath of the death of Winckelmann, signify the continuance of his artistic development within his historical milieu, and ultimately lead to his departure to Weimar, a moment that marks the completion of the artist's education.

While Goethe's autobiography presents a *Bildungsgeschichte* through a dynamic interaction between the self and history, Schopenhauer's autobiography presents history as an antagonist to the self, and instead reveals a story of "anti-Bildung" as the artist's development is stymied by the sexist educational strictures of the Enlightenment. In looking back on her childhood, Schopenhauer addresses the backwardness of late eighteenth-century Danzig within the context of girls' education and women's social mobility. Sexist mores and attitudes stymy Schopenhauer's unique developmental path at a young age: her plans to study in Berlin with Chodowiecki, whom she considers "[der größte] Maler der [in] der Welt, oder doch wenigstens in Deutschland existierte," are laughed at by her family, who view the artist profession as a "trade" (*Handwerk*) that is unbefitting of a middle-class woman (98 - 99). Schopenhauer, who later in life becomes an author, articulates her unique personal identity through her exclusion from a *Bildungsgeschichte* of historical prominence: her inability to pursue her dream to become a visual artist as a child imbues her with a sense of self whose uniqueness is defined by its independence from the historical processes of self-cultivation.

From her independent ahistorical narrative standpoint, Schopenhauer

narrates history as impressions rather than a process of artistic growth, as in the case of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. Schopenhauer invokes smallpox inoculation as an educational Enlightenment institution that paralyzes her unique personal development: for Schopenhauer, Bildung represents an induction into a patriarchal society in which her unique personal development has no place. Schopenhauer's childhood smallpox inoculation and her ensuing sickness (a "nerve fever") represent a period in which she recognizes her self as a static and unchanging entity that remains independent of historical progress. Schopenhauer invokes smallpox inoculation as a progressive tool of the Enlightenment that also obstructs her artistic education; she thereby incites criticism for the Enlightenment as a supposedly progressive and liberating movement that is meant to unlock the potential of the individual through Mündigkeit, however fails to do so in the case of women.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Schopenhauer scholars often emphasize her life and works from a feminist perspective. Anna Eder (*Das lebenswürdige Geschwätz meines Geschlechts*, 1997) observes that Schopenhauer takes part in an inter-textual dialogue between women authors, specifically through her advocacy of the French language. In her translations of French women authors, Schopenhauer encourages the learning of the French among a female readership, while following in the tradition of other female authors, such as Sophie von La Roche, who helped to establish an inter-textual dialogue among women readers and writers in a similar manner (37-41). Julia Di Bartolo (*Selbstbestimmtes Leben um 1800*, 2008) investigates the degree to which Schopenhauer could be called a "self-made" author in actively pursuing her writing career in Weimar. Di Bartolo deviates from the typical scholarly perspective that emphasizes women's restrictions in freely pursuing their literary goals: "Lange Zeit wurde davon ausgegangen, dass Frauen nur innerhalb bestimmter Bereiche einer Gesellschaft wirkten und nur eingeschränkt am künstlerischen Leben, an Bildung und Geselligkeit teilhaben konnten" (11). Di Bartolo discovers that Schopenhauer, in re-establishing herself in Weimar, proactively pursues her writing career by making use of her talents and opportunities: "die Umsetzung ihres Lebensentwurfs verband sie eng mit den Bedürfnissen, Erwartungen, Fähigkeiten und Einstellungen zur Welt" (105). Other scholars investigate Schopenhauer's travel writings within the scope of feminism: Erdmut Jost (*Landschaftsblick und Landschaftsbild*, 2005), for example, considers the travelogue to be a literary form that allowed women writers to discuss subjects that were normally off limits: "die Anlaßstruktur

The self-reflexive autobiographies of Goethe and Schopenhauer invoke Bildung as a modern and progressive form of education through self-discovery and self-cultivation. Kant and Lessing articulate the education of the modern individual as being linked to the individual's recognition of inner truth, as well as his independent reasoning, while also asserting that a teleological historical progression hinges on a broader cultural education of Enlightenment principles. In his "Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?" (1784), Kant recognizes the late eighteenth century as a historical turning point in which the leadership of a freely reasoning intelligentsia becomes desirable. Kant perceives the beginning of a positive historical progression in which a larger number of individuals may begin to live according to their independent understandings of the world; however in its present state the world still requires the subordination of authoritative institutions—especially religious institutions—to the learned (*Gelehrten*): "Leben wir jetzt in einem aufgeklärtem Zeitalter? So ist die Antwort: Nein, aber wohl im Zeitalter der Aufklärung" (491). Kant's conceptualization of Mündigkeit awards prominence to the independent reasoning of the modern individual while also asserting that this mode of independent reasoning is itself a product of a larger historical progression.

Kant expresses similar ideas in "Über Pädagogik" (1803), in which he asserts

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einer Reise ermöglicht es ihnen, die verschiedensten Themen anzusprechen und sich ausführlich zu Fragen zu äußern, die in ihren anderen Werken tabu gewesen wären" (18). Jost observes that Schopenhauer's "Frankreichsreisebeschreibung" reflects an aesthetic evolution that elicits the satirical tone of an emancipated female voice: "mit der Allegorese, der Moraldidaktik und der melancholischen-empfindsamen Gefühlssuche schwindet [...] gleichzeitig die den älteren Reisebeschreibungen eigene emphatische Ernsthaftigkeit [...]" The literary tradition of the "Landschaftsdarstellung" "wird freigesetzt für den ästhetischen Spieltrieb des jeweiligen Autors" (175).

that the cultivation of self-discipline within a reasoning individual depends on proper guidance in his formative years. Kant applies this notion of the education of self-discipline to a teleological argument of social progress: “die Menschengattung soll die ganze Naturanlage der Menschheit, durch ihre eigne Bemühung, nach und nach von selbst herausbringen. Eine Generation erzieht die andere” (697). In Kant’s view, the education of one modern enlightened individual by another can be analogously applied to the influences of one enlightened generation upon the following generation within a teleological historical progression.

Similarly, Lessing conceptualizes education as an independent realization of inner truth by the modern individual, while also acknowledging that this form of self-realized education plays a didactic role within a teleological progression. In “Die Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts” (1780), Lessing describes the education of the individual as a productive developmental process that accesses inner qualities rather than imposes outward influences: “Erziehung giebt dem Menschen [...] das, was er aus sich selber haben könnte, nur geschwinder und leichter” (75). Applying the analogy of an individual’s education to the religious “Offenbarung bey dem ganzen Menschengeschlechte,” Lessing describes the Israelites of the Old Testament as the “künftige Erzieher des Menschengeschlechts” (78), as their initial revelation of God’s existence allows for the rationalistic proofs of His existence in centuries to come (“wie weit war dieser Begriff des Einigen, noch unter dem wahren transcendentalen Begriffe des Einigen, welchen die Vernunft so spät erst aus dem Begriffe des Unendlichen mit Sicherheit schliessen lernen!” [77]). In order to describe history as an overarching education of humanity based on divine

revelation, Lessing invokes the modern Enlightenment individual's revelation of inner truth within the process of his education. Like the individual who discovers truth through the educational stages of his life, history must unfold in stages of development—hence Lessing's comparison of the Israelites initial relationship with God to that between a naïve child and father who, in His tutelage, doles out “punishments” and “rewards” (“die Lehre von Strafe und Belohnung”) (79).

The self-reflexive autobiographies of Goethe and Schopenhauer present differing narratives of self-growth based on differing conceptions of Bildung. The depiction of Goethe's life in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* resembles the teleological Bildung-narratives presented by Lessing and Kant in their works on education: by building a narrative of historical progress through the Bildungsgeschichte of a modern individual, Goethe demonstrates how historical progress can be made. Goethe's life exemplifies Bildung as a process of one's cultivation of inner truth; as an iconic cultural figure, his life also exemplifies how the cultivation of inner truth contributes to historical progress. Schopenhauer's autobiography, on the other hand, ironizes Bildung as a form of education that supposedly emphasizes self-cultivation and promotes historical progress: Schopenhauer's smallpox inoculation expresses a singular moment of Bildung that obstructs her unique course of development and simultaneously imbues her with a newfound sense of self, one that remains independent of historical progress rather than conforming to it. Schopenhauer's autobiography can be called “self-reflexive” in that she experiences Bildung as a moment in which she discovers her unique and independent self; ironically, this moment of self-discovery arises from her exclusion from a



Bildungsgeschichte that promotes historical progress through a life trajectory of self-cultivation.

In his portrayal of a historically dynamic Bildungsgeschichte, Goethe narrates his life as a historical process of reflection as he asserts his unique self: his course of self-development involves his discovery and re-articulation of the relationship between self and world. Georg Lukács links the representation of self-development throughout life in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* with the representation of teleological historical progression. Lukács (*Goethe und seine Zeit*, 1950) recognizes in Goethe's literary production—most notably *Faust* (1775 – 1832), but also *Dichtung und Wahrheit*—an engagement with the claim of idealist philosophy that life is a historical dialectical process of subjective reflection. According to Lukács, Goethe's works reflect a philosophical evolution in eighteenth-century Germany by revealing the “bestimmten Auflösungstendenzen der Aufklärung” and the “ersten Übergänge zur idealistischen Dialektik” in German intellectual culture (213). Within this transition, the Enlightenment “Erkenntnis,” through which the limitations of subjective perception are first acknowledged as problematic, evolves into the idealist “Erkenntnistheorie,” according to which these limitations are accepted and embraced as “contradiction” (*Widerspruch*).

Lukács observes that the shift in thought that led to this “Umgestaltung der Philosophie” reaches its apotheosis in Hegel (Lukács 214). In his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* (1807), Hegel articulates the perception of the subject as being limited in its separation from the “Geist” that it perceives (“diese Selbstständigkeit der Gestalt erscheint als ein bestimmtes [...] denn sie ist ein entzweytes” [105]). However, in

the process of reflection, the subject's perceptual contradiction "transcends" (*Aufheben*) within a dialectical historical progression. Despite the appearance that this transcendence occurs through an agent separate from the perceiving subject, the subject and the Geist are actually one and the same within the infinite chain of Being: "das Aufheben der Entzweyung geschieht insofern durch ein anderes. Aber es ist ebensosehr an ihr selbst; denn eben jene Flüssigkeit ist die Substanz der selbstständigen Gestalten; diese Substanz aber ist unendlich [...]" (105). Hegel defines life itself as a dialectical process of transcendence described above: "das Leben in dem allgemeinen flüssigen Medium, ein [auseinanderlegen] der Gestalten wird eben dadurch zur Bewegung derselben, oder zum Leben als Process" (106). According to the Hegelian dialectic, the life process reveals itself to be identical to the "fluid medium" (*flüssiges Medium*) of the Geist, as the Geist is essentially a movement of the subject's reflection in the process of transcendence.

Hegel's notion of life as a transcendental process evolves from the eighteenth-century "discovery" that "der Widerspruch das Zentrum von Leben und Erkenntnis ist" (Lukács 214). According to Lukács, this discovery finally results in the "Historisierung des ganzen Lebensprozesses" evident in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: within the process of one's life, the perceptual contradiction" is resolved as a transcendental historical progression (Lukács 214). Positioned within the burgeoning Hegelian idealism of eighteenth-century Germany, Goethe's work overall demonstrates *intuitive* knowledge gleaned from the experiences of the "life process" (*Lebensprozeß*) rather than through the Enlightenment faculty of reason: "für [Goethes] noch überwiegend gefühlsmässigen Standpunkt bedeutet die Ahnung

der Dialektik: ein intuitives Erfassen der bewegenden und bewegten Einheit der Welt [...]” (216). In *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe betrays a sensitivity to the Hegelian “bewegenden und bewegten Einheit der Welt”—the world as a transcendental process to which his individual life contributes—as he writes his life as history.<sup>33</sup> In the foreword to *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, for example, Goethe asserts that the artist’s primarily goal in autobiography is to articulate his personal relationship to the “All” (*das Ganze*) and summarize his vision of the world as he has expressed it in his art during his lifetime (“[zu zeigen] inwiefern ihm das Ganze

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<sup>33</sup> Echoing Lukács, Wiebke Hoheisel (*Goethes Geschichtsdenken in seinen autobiographischen Schriften*, 2013) suggests that *Dichtung und Wahrheit* emphasizes Goethe’s status of artist in generating a historical narrative through his unique life: “der schaffende Mensch wird so zum Kristallisationspunkt seiner Zeit” (3). While Hoheisel focuses on Goethe’s social status of artist in explicating the dynamic relationship between self and world in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, other important scholars have often considered the work within the context of larger cultural, literary or epistemological trends. Friedrich Meinecke, (*Die Entstehung des Historismus*, 1959) attributes a more subjective treatment of history in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* to the trend of historicism during the outgoing eighteenth century: *Dichtung und Wahrheit* activates the past as a means to communicate universal truths—the “zeitlose Gleichartigkeit” and the “Kreislauf menschlicher Dinge”—that also have a bearing on the present (574). Roy Pascal (*Design and Truth in Autobiography*, 1960) attributes the dynamic relationship between self and world in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* to the period of the “classical autobiography.” Pascal posits that between the years marked by the publication of Rousseau’s *Confessions* (1782) and the final version of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1831), autobiographies often present the self as the “object of devoted attention” that “asserts its worth for its own sake.” In its attention to an abstracted concept of the self, however, the classical autobiography also betrays an awareness that this self is rooted in the outside world (51-2). Similar to Pascal, Eugene Stelzig (*The Romantic Subject in Autobiography. Rousseau and Goethe*, 2000) sees a connection between Goethe and Rousseau as “Romantic” autobiographers. Stelzig sees in Goethe and Rousseau an “inward turn” that begins with Augustine’s devotional *Confessions* and eventually leads to the secularized “Romantic” autobiography of the outgoing eighteenth century (2-4). Finally, Klaus-Detlef Müller (*Autobiographie und Roman*, 1976) and Günter Niggel (*Geschichte der deutschen Autobiographie im 18. Jahrhundert*, 1977) both recognize *Dichtung und Wahrheit* to be an important moment in a literary evolution: Müller sees *Dichtung und Wahrheit* as the apotheosis of the “literary autobiography”—a form in which the autobiography adopts the “epischen Erzähltechniken” of the novel—in Germany (28-29); while Niggel sees *Dichtung und Wahrheit* as the end result of the secularization of autobiographical modes—such as the “selbstquälerischen Konfessionen” of the Pietist autobiography—in the eighteenth century (168 - 171).

widerstrebt [...] wie er sich eine Welt- und Menschenansicht daraus gebildet und wie er sie, wenn er Künstler, Dichter, Schriftsteller ist, wieder nach außen abespiegelt" [Goethe 11]). As the Bildungsgeschichte of an artist who, in his intuitive "life process," reflects his vision of the world back onto it, *Dichtung und Wahrheit* depicts the development of Goethe's unique consciousness as a driving force of historical progress: his vision of the world becomes history itself.

In contrast to Goethe, Schopenhauer's artistic vision does not determine history in a transcendental process of reflection. In her introduction, Schopenhauer clearly states that she does not wish to sully her depictions of history with overly subjective poetic interpretations: "Wahrheit will ich geben, reine, unverfälschte Wahrheit, ohne jede Beimischung von Dichtung, aber mit Auswahl, ohne auf eine ausführliche Darstellung aller Ereignisse meines Lebens einzugehen, die doch nur für die Wenigen einiges Interesse haben können, welche persönlichen Anteil an mir nehmen" (8). Despite her reputation as a novelist and travel writer, Schopenhauer does not view the "poetry" (*Dichtung*) of her personal experiences as belonging to history, as Goethe does: her portrayal of history derives from the narrative consciousness of one who retains a distance from it. At the same time, however, Schopenhauer's distance from history allows her to assert an independent narrative perspective, from which history can be related with a degree of subjectivity. Schopenhauer concludes the above statement by claiming: "mit meinen Herzensangelegenheiten aber will ich die Welt verschonen [...] (8);" Schopenhauer's desire to protect the world through her personal "matters of the heart" (*Herzensangelegenheiten*) reveals a narrator who, while removed from the

transcendental life process, nonetheless reveals a consciousness of her unique self through a subjective portrayal of historical events. For this reason, Schopenhauer relates her childhood smallpox inoculation as a fearful and humiliating ordeal, in which she is exposed to the invasive stares of the “swine” (*Ferkel*) looking on (Schopenhauer 78): her emphasis on the humiliation of her smallpox inoculation reveals her independent narrative perspective on historical events that she has chosen to preserve with her “Herzensangelegenheiten.”

Goethe and Schopenhauer’s divergent conceptions of Bildung express a difference in the way each writer treats illness and illness recovery. Goethe’s artistic education is expressed as a sequence of illness recoveries within a historical progression: beginning with his smallpox illness, the self experiences frequent moments of Bildung, each involving a dynamic process of reflection between self and world. Goethe’s hemorrhage in the wake of Winckelmann’s death, for example, signifies a negative physiological reaction to a loss in the world of art, while his recovery signifies the growth of an artistic consciousness that might carry on Winckelmann’s tradition. Referring to his friend Gröning, who aids him in his recovery, Goethe writes: “er sparte nichts [...] mich aus dem Nachsinnen über meinen Zustand herauszuziehen und mir Genesung und gesunde Tätigkeit in der nächsten Zeit vorzuzeigen und zu versprechen” (372). Goethe’s illness constitutes a spiritual crisis after the loss of Winckelmann as a great cultural leader; after his recovery, his future “healthy activity” (*gesunde Tätigkeit*) would replenish the world of art.

Schopenhauer illustrates her illness recoveries in the opposite terms: her

recovery from her nerve fever leads to her realization that her dreams to become an artist will not be fulfilled; in this moment, her unique identity as author is borne in separation from historical progress. In her disappointment, Schopenhauer alludes to the beginning of her literary endeavors much later on, as a matured woman: “doch der tief in meinem ganzen Wesen eingewurzelte Trieb [...] liess sich nicht ausrotten; dreißig Jahre später führte er mich an den Schreibtisch, um mit der Feder auszuführen, was der Geist der Zeit, in der ich geboren ward, mit dem Griffel und dem Pinsel zu können mir verweigert hatte” (100). This lapse of thirty years to the beginning of Schopenhauer’s writing career represents a period in which she has not undergone Bildung in a teleological-historical process, however has maintained her artistic gift that allows her now to take up the “feather” (*Feder*): her artistic drive has endured, despite the fact that it stands at odds with the Geist of the time in which she was born. Illness recovery in Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit* and Schopenhauer’s *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder* reveals the disparate ways in which these works constructs Bildung within the scope of Enlightenment progress: as an artistic cultivation of the unique individual, or as an obstruction to this cultivation, from which a static artistic consciousness nonetheless arises.

### B. Goethe’s Smallpox Illness

Goethe’s Bildungsgeschichte is initiated during his childhood smallpox illness. In the throes of his smallpox illness, he is shaken from his childhood innocence by the Übel of his illness experience. The intensity of Goethe’s smallpox illness compels him to become aware that he is independently vulnerable to the Übel as a recurring anxiety-inducing experience (in the aftermath of his smallpox

illness, Goethe writes: “jedesmal versicherte man mir, es wäre ein Glück, daß diese Übel nun für immer vorüber sei; aber leider drohte schon wieder ein andres im Hintergrund und rückte heran” [45]). Within this heightened sense of self-awareness, Goethe’s recovery from smallpox also represents a growth of the self: in gaining a clear and harmonious mental state during his recovery from smallpox, Goethe becomes aware of his unique artistic talents, recognizes his artistic Bildung as his unique life course, and acquires a sensitivity to the clarity and harmony of Classicism, an artistic movement in which he plays a prominent role. In Goethe’s smallpox illness, he recognizes the Übel of sickness as a spiritual challenge that will continually return throughout his life, thereby casting his life as a process in which the self will continuously grow through illness recovery.

In the first book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe relates memories of his childhood in Frankfurt am Main, including his explorations of the city and his lessons in “grammar” (*Grammatik*) and “geography” (*Geographie*) (18 - 39). These opening sequences represent the narrative position of a child observing his surroundings and are largely reflective, although Goethe also demonstrates a mode of independent thinking within his childhood self. Of his lessons, for example, Goethe writes “die Grammatik missfiel mir, weil ich sie nur als ein willkürliches Gesetz ansah” (39). At a young age, Goethe demonstrates a sophisticated intellectual sensitivity to the conflicting relationship between the rules of language and its production; Goethe discovers a distaste for grammar that reveals to him the nature of his intellectual consciousness. Despite this early allusion to Bildung, Goethe’s subsequent smallpox illness, related near the end of Book One, introduces the Übel

as the dominant context for the growth of the self within his autobiography.

Goethe's initial exposure to the Übel during his smallpox illness makes him aware of Bildung as a stabilizing process in combatting the influences of a negative experience: Goethe comes to perceive the process of self-development as a recovery from the destabilizing state of sickness, both physically and mentally.

Goethe's initial encounter with the smallpox Übel transpires against the backdrop of anti-inoculation Germany. Within the context of the widespread dread of smallpox,<sup>34</sup> Goethe's consciousness of his vulnerability toward the disease informs his anxieties pertaining to the Übel; his anxieties are exacerbated by the backward popular attitudes toward inoculation that make him even more vulnerable. Goethe describes his smallpox illness as a ruefully common childhood experience of his era. Due to popular resistance to inoculation in eighteenth-century Germany, smallpox "wütete durch die Familien, tötete und entstellte viele Kinder," while the children of families who were "frei von Vorurteil" received inoculation<sup>35</sup> (44). Goethe describes his awakening to the fears of the Übel during the unexpected arrival of smallpox: "wie eine Familienspazierfahrt im Sommer durch ein plötzliches

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<sup>34</sup> Miller observes that widespread dread of smallpox became a Europe-wide phenomenon in the early eighteenth century: "the Age of Reason could just as truthfully be labeled the Age of Smallpox. [Taking] the place of old enemies like the plague was a formidable new scourge [...] [smallpox] and measles were held in the early eighteenth century to be the 'most Universal diseases in all Nations' [...]" (26 – 27).

<sup>35</sup> In eighteenth-century Germany, these popular "prejudices" (*Vorurteile*) against inoculation were based in the belief that the procedure represented a man-made intrusion into the realm of nature and religion. It was widely believed that "smallpox matter" (*Pockenmaterie*) already existed within the child's body from birth and was more likely to break out when the body was in a certain constitution, such as one affected by weather conditions. Frevert explains that childhood smallpox illness represented punishment for original sin, while high childhood death tolls in smallpox epidemics were regarded as expected natural occurrences, and even in some cases as "retroactive birth control" (*nachträgliche Geburtenkontrolle*) (69 – 70).



Gewitter auf eine höchst verdriessliche Weise gestört und ein froher Zustand in den widerwärtigsten verwandelt wird, so fallen auch die Kinderkrankheiten unerwartet in die schönste Jahreszeit des Frühlebens. Mir erging es auch nicht anders" (43). Goethe characterizes smallpox as a disease that, within the ignorant and technologically bereft era of his childhood, can arrive with frightening spontaneity—like a "sudden storm" (*plötzliches Gewitter*)—and infect children who, unguarded by inoculation, are defenseless against it.

The fear of a spontaneous smallpox epidemic in anti-inoculation Germany emphasizes the emotive force of the smallpox Übel experienced by Goethe in his childhood: smallpox does not simply bring about a physical ailment, it also inspires fear and destabilizes one's serene mental state, metaphorically illustrated by Goethe as a "family outing" ("eine Familienspazierfahrt im Sommer"). Goethe's description of smallpox as a "sudden storm" implies a destabilized physical condition that also expresses fear of the Übel as a physical manifestation: while the allusion to a storm implies a negative, intense emotional reaction to the Übel, smallpox also instantiates an "attack" of a feeling of unease in Goethe ("ein Missbehagen [...] überfiel [mich]" [43]); this "Missbehagen" represents an articulation of his anxious emotional reaction to the Übel as it violently overcomes him. This attack permanently alters his consciousness: he is now aware that a serene mental state can suddenly be disrupted by a "sudden storm."

In the aftermath of his illness, Goethe recovers physical and mental stability while wise to the possibility that the Übel can strike again, revealing a new level of self-knowledge. As he recovers, Goethe writes: "ich selbst war zufrieden, nur wieder

das Tageslicht zu sehen und nach und nach die fleckige Haut zu verlieren; aber andere waren unbarmherzig genug, mich öfters an den vorigen Zustand zu erinnern" (44). Goethe emerges from his smallpox illness changed: the childhood innocence of the "Familienspazierfahrt im Sommer" has been sullied by the thought of the Übel, or the previous condition that Goethe has no choice but to remember. Goethe's allusion to the "blotchy skin" (*fleckige Haut*) represents the diminishment of the immediate horror: now in a state of recovery, the violent outbreak of pustules become soft and "blotchy" as they recede, allowing Goethe to once again view the "daylight" (*Tageslicht*) in a clear state of mind. For Goethe, a clear, unmarked face represents a mental re-stabilization and the Übel as a vanished memory. Describing his recovery, Goethe mentions that the pustules "fiel [mir] wie eine Maske vom Gesicht, ohne dass die Blattern eine sichtbare Spur auf der Haut zurückgelassen" (44). While Goethe's face and mind are now clear of the Übel, however, there is indeed an invisible trace of his experience, namely his "Bildung" that has become "noticeably changed" ("merklich verändert") (44). As this change in his Bildung cannot be seen by the outside world, Goethe is expressing a new level of self-knowledge that he alone perceives, namely that his inner self has changed and may indeed undergo another transformation with another exposure to the Übel.

Goethe alone possesses knowledge of the Übel as an agent of personal change; this knowledge reinforces the idea that his story of development is unique to himself. While others attempt to comfort the young Goethe with the fact that one can only have smallpox once (45), Goethe's sustained wariness of the "measles" (*Masern*) and the "wind-pox" (*Windblattern*) reveals his more intimate knowledge of

the Übel as a dynamic destabilizing force; those surrounding the convalescing Goethe, not having undergone his particular smallpox illness, do not possess this intimate knowledge. His initial exposure to the Übel also deepens his self-knowledge by making him aware of his independent mind, revealed not only in his wariness of those who attempt to comfort him, but also in his adverseness to the opinions of his aunt, who considers her nephew to have become “ugly” (*garstig*) after his smallpox illness. Of his aunt’s changed outlook on her nephew, Goethe writes: “und so erfuhr ich frühzeitig, dass uns die Menschen für das Vergnügen, das wir ihnen gewährt haben, sehr oft empfindlich büßen lassen” (45). While this comment represents a nugget of wisdom gleaned from Goethe’s unique perspective of a life experience, it also suggests the perspective of the popular artist that he would become: Goethe would come to be well acquainted with the “joy” (*Vergnügen*) that he would grant others through his work, and would also find himself in the position to be unfairly persecuted for granting it. Charlotte Lee suggests that, in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe alludes to his future literary activities by deliberately describing moments that “resonate with scenes from his writing.”<sup>36</sup>

In conjunction with the development of a new independent consciousness, Goethe becomes aware of his Bildung as an inner development of the unique self. Following Goethe’s smallpox illness, his father overburdens him with “doubled lessons” that Goethe finds unappealing, as they disrupt Goethe’s “inner development” (*innere Entwicklung*) that had already begun to take a “decisive

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<sup>36</sup> Lee observes that, in the characterization of Friederike, “there is much [here] to remind us of Gretchen—more, in fact, than in the figure in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* who is known as Gretchen” (45 – 46).

direction" (45). Goethe's recognition of an "inner development"—one that stands at odds with the educational overtures of his father—initiates an independent *Bildungsgeschichte* for Goethe, as he consciously traces his inner growth throughout the second half of the eighteenth century from childhood into young adulthood. The fact that Goethe is conscious of an inner development in the aftermath of his smallpox illness reveals his sick body to be a space of inner experience: reflecting Butler's notion of the "the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body" (*Gender Trouble*, 141), Goethe constructs the "fantasy" of the development of the inner self through his body as a metaphorical space.

In Book Two, this independent inner development encourages Goethe to actively pursue his artistic cultivation. Book Two, beginning when Goethe is six years old, describes his earliest attempts at storytelling, such as the "fairy tales" (*Märchen*) with which he entertains his childhood friends (Goethe reconstructs one of these "Knabenmärchen," entitled "Der neue Paris") (59 – 60). Later on in Book Two, Goethe describes the beginnings of a more mature poetic style while reflecting on "das Miniaturbild eines schönen Herrn, in Uniform mit Stern und Orden" in his grandmother's home (81). While pondering this miniature portrait, Goethe recognizes within himself "jenes moderne Dichtertalent, welches durch eine abenteuerliche Verknüpfung der bedeutenden Zustände des menschlichen Lebens sich die Teilnahme der ganzen kultivierten Welt zu verschaffen weiss" (81). This remark reveals Goethe's early recognition of his unique ability to universalize the meaningful aspects of human life in art.

At the moment in which he recognizes his "Dichtertalent," Goethe also

believes that his artistic consciousness can only be understood by himself; this belief distinguishes his artistic Bildung as unique to himself: “da ich nun aber einen solchen Fall niemanden zu vertrauen oder auch nur von ferne nachzufragen mich unterstand, so liess ich es an einer heimlichen Betriebsamkeit nicht fehlen, um wo möglich der Sache etwas näher zu kommen” (81). Goethe engages in this “secret activity” (*heimliche Betriebsamkeit*) as a private process of self-realization through artistic development, as no one else can truly understand his poetic talent. Goethe’s inner development, borne from his awakened consciousness in the aftermath of his smallpox illness, ultimately results in his active pursuit of artistic cultivation and Bildung.

While Goethe first assumes his secret artistic activity in Book Two, his earlier recovery from smallpox reveals the initial developments of his artistic sensibilities that would have a great impact on German culture. Goethe mentions that his reflections on the opinions of his aunt and the commentators on his state of health “vermehrten meinen Hang zum Nachdenken,” illustrating in general the developing mental habits of a great thinker (45). Along with his “habit of contemplation” (“Hang zum Nachdenken”), Goethe also develops an affinity for the Stoics’ method of toleration—the “Duldungslehre”—in order to cope with his anxiety surrounding the possibility of future illnesses: “weder von Masern noch Windblattern [blieb] ich verschont [...] so schienen mir die Tugenden, welche ich an den Stoikern hatte rühmen hören, höchst nachahmenswert” (45). Goethe adopts a more tempered state of mind, one aligned with the dispassionateness of the Stoics, as a reaction to his awareness of the Übel. Goethe’s allusion to the Stoic Duldungslehre indicates his

mental recovery from smallpox to be an important moment in the evolution of German cultural history: Goethe's affinity to the Stoics foreshadows his later associations with Winckelmann and Weimar Classicism. Goethe's discovery of the Stoic Duldungslehre constitutes his initial recognition of his interests in classical antiquity, suggesting that his smallpox episode is constructed as a turning point in the inner life of an iconic artist.

More specifically, Goethe's adoption of the Stoic Duldungslehre reflects harmony as a central tenet of Classicism: in a now healthy state, Goethe exhibits a calm and harmonious mindset. According to Lukács, Goethe's famous correlation of "Classicism" with "health" ("Klassisch nenne ich das Gesunde, Romantisch das Kranke" [356]) belies a balanced narrative perspective in view of a "richtiges [Verhalten] zum gesellschaftlichen Leben" (357). In returning to a harmonious mindset in the wake of the destabilizing smallpox Übel, Goethe can assume a healthy and clear-minded narrative position as he investigates the relationship between his unique inner self and the outside "social life" (*gesellschaftliches Leben*) through his Bildungsgeschichte. The mental destabilization of the smallpox Übel instantiates a moment of Bildung through recovery, leading to Goethe's discovery of the Stoic Duldungslehre and to his recognition of the importance of a healthy and harmonious mind.

Goethe's newfound ugliness in the wake of his smallpox illness can also be interpreted as a disruption of the harmonious mindset associated with Classicism. Goethe's new "ugly" (*garstig*) appearance represents an external physical expression of the negative inner experience of the Übel: while the smallpox episode

of Wilhelmine von Bayreuth reflects her beauty as the externalization of a positive inner experience, Goethe's ugliness expresses the mental destabilization of his smallpox episode through a disfigurement of aesthetic beauty. Goethe's ugliness reflects a disruption of his harmonious inner state that leads to his balanced and harmonious artistic output and defines him as a cultural figure of Classicism. Cornelia Zumbusch (*Die Immunität der Klassik*, 2011) observes that Goethe's works reveal an "Ethos des Maßes auf die Ebene eines harmonischen Stils;" furthermore, this "harmonious" literary style is often associated with his superior health: twentieth-century critics often express a "Lob des gesunden Goethe, das synekdochisch seinen literarischen Arbeiten gilt" (Zumbusch 8). As the possessor of a healthy and balanced body and mind, Goethe's smallpox illness disrupts his normal state of physical health, and disfigures his face as an outward expression aesthetic beauty; this disfigurement represents an imbalance of his inner state from which his artistic output derives.<sup>37</sup>

### C. Recovery as Bildung: the Death of Winckelmann

In presenting this self-reflexive Bildungsgeschichte, Goethe engages with two separate categories of Bildung through illness recovery. The other autobiographies analyzed in this dissertation present the author's childhood smallpox experience as either the initiating moment of his or her Bildungsgeschichte, or as a moment of

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<sup>37</sup> Helmut Pfotenhauer (*Literarische Anthropologie*, 1987) also draws a similar parallel between the ugly face of the smallpox victim and aesthetic beauty. Pfotenhauer recognizes the facial smallpox scars of Nikolaus—the protagonist of Jean Paul's *Komet*—contrast with portraiture as an elevated artform. Jean Paul mockingly associates Nikolaus' smallpox scars with the earthy "niederländischen Stil," as opposed to the classical elevated art of Greece or Rome (13 – 32).

inner subjective experience separate from the discourse of Bildung. The childhood smallpox episode of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, on the other hand, relates Goethe's initiation into adulthood as an iconic writer who is aware of his influences on history. After the awakening of his artistic consciousness during his initial exposure to the Übel of smallpox, his later illness recoveries illustrate his self-development from a more reflective standpoint, revealing a consciousness that his artistic maturation bears historical significance. In the aftermath of Winckelmann's death, Goethe suffers a hemorrhage; Goethe's recovery from his hemorrhage represents a conscious artistic rejuvenation after suffering the loss of a great cultural leader.

Book Eight, in which Winckelmann's death occurs, begins with Goethe's description of his friend and colleague Adam Friedrich Oeser, an accomplished artist who was director of the Leipziger Zeichenakademie when Goethe was a student. Goethe portrays Oeser as his compatriot within the cultural landscape of eighteenth-century Germany. As fellow artists, Goethe and Oeser are equally compelled by Winckelmann's writings (Goethe writes that both he and Oeser "lasen fleissig [Winckelmanns] Schriften" [367]) and are equally shaken by his sudden death. Like the unexpected arrival of smallpox, the untimely death of Winckelmann shakes Goethe and Oeser alike into an unstable and desperate mental state: "wie ein Donnerschlag bei klarem Himmel fiel die Nachricht von Winckelmanns Tode zwischen uns nieder [...] Dieser ungeheuere Vorfall tat eine ungeheuere Wirkung; es war ein allgemein Jammern und Wehklagen, und sein frühzeitiger Tod schärfte die Aufmerksamkeit auf den Wert seines Lebens" (368). Similar to the "plötzliches Gewitter" of his smallpox illness, Goethe invokes the weather metaphor of the



“thunderclap” (*Donnerschlag*) in order to convey the abrupt effect of Winckelmann’s death on his comparatively placid mental state. Furthermore, Goethe’s reference to the new “attention” (*Aufmerksamkeit*) toward Winckelmann’s contributions in the wake of his death intimates an elevated state of mental awareness, not unlike Goethe’s anxious awareness of the *Übel* following his smallpox illness. In this case, however, the attention is felt on a broader social level, since, as Goethe observes, anyone pursuing intellectual endeavors involving “art” (*Kunst*) or “antiquity” (*Altertum*) in Germany at this time “hatte [stets] Winckelmann vor Augen, dessen Tüchtigkeit im Vaterlande mit Enthusiasmus anerkannt wurde” (366-367). The destabilization of Goethe’s mind in the aftermath of the “thunderclap” of Winckelmann’s death results from a disruption of Germany’s cultural milieu, of which Goethe is an integral part. As an iconic figure of German culture, the tragic death of Winckelmann affects Goethe personally, even to the point that he grows ill: Goethe’s illness represents an artist’s highly personal negative reaction to a disruption in the world of art.

As in Goethe’s smallpox episode, the emotional despair resulting from a negative experience is expressed on a physical level through illness. Goethe also translates the emotional despair owing to the loss of Winckelmann into a physical malady: “indem ich nun aber Winckelmanns Abscheiden grenzenlos beklagte, so dachte ich nicht, dass ich mich bald in dem Falle befinden würde, für mein eigenes Leben besorgt zu sein: denn unter allem diesem hatten meine körperlichen Zustände nicht die beste Wendung genommen” (368). This passage indicates a direct relationship between Goethe’s destabilized mental state over the death of

Winckelmann and his declining health, as if the lack of mental control leading to his “limitless grieving” (*grenzloses Beklagen*) also results in the destabilization of his bodily state. Goethe’s compromised “bodily condition” (*körperliche Zustände*) ultimately results in another attack of an illness: “eines Nachts wachte ich mit einem heftigen Blutsturz auf” (369). Goethe is overcome by the hemorrhage (*Blutsturz*) as he is in bed, sleeping and defenseless. Goethe’s defenselessness during the attack of his hemorrhage emphasizes a level of psychological alarm that resonates with both the “thunderclap” of Winckelmann’s death, and also with his heightened anxiety toward the smallpox Übel to which he, as a small child, is vulnerable without the protection of inoculation.

Despite this familiar anxious reaction to an illness, Goethe’s recovery from his hemorrhage differs from that of his smallpox episode: now aware of his *Bildung* as a process of physical and mental recovery, Goethe relishes in it. After the immediate danger of the hemorrhage has passed, a “growth” (*Geschwulst*) is discovered on Goethe’s neck; Goethe’s laments that this further complication of the hemorrhage “[vergällt] die Freude an einer erfolgreichen Besserung” (369). Directly after this lament, however, Goethe, almost as an afterthought, expresses a more positive attitude toward long-term recovery: “Genesung ist jedoch immer angenehm und erfreulich, wenn sie auch langsam und kümmerlich vonstatten geht, und da bei mir sich die Natur geholfen, so schien ich auch nunmehr ein anderer Mensch geworden zu sein” (370). Goethe relishes in a slow recuperation from his illness because he is now conscious that this process will provide him a learning experience, in which he will be able to become “another person” (“ein anderer

Mensch"). Goethe's newfound self is realized through Bildung: he is revived by his interactions with "excellent men" ("vorzügliche Männer"), whose "educational conversation" ("lehrreiche Unterhaltung") helps him to gradually regain his health through a process of intellectual edification. One such man, Langer, subsequently a librarian in Wolfenbüttel, inspires Goethe to return to his love of literature:

Die deutsche Literatur und mit ihr meine eignen poetischen  
Unternehmungen waren mir schon seit einiger Zeit fremd geworden, und ich  
wendete mich wieder, wie es bei einem solchen autodidaktischen Kreisläufe  
zu erfolgen pflegt, gegen die geliebten Alten, die noch immer, wie ferne blaue  
Berge, deutlich in ihren Umrissen und Massen, aber unkenntlich in ihren  
Teilen und inneren Beziehungen, den Horizont meiner geistigen Wünsche  
begrenzten [...] ich [erhielt] eine Anzahl griechischer Autoren, deren  
Benutzung mich, selbst bei dem langsamsten Genesen, erquickten sollte.  
(373)

Goethe's affinity for classical authors, acknowledged during his smallpox episode in his appreciation for the Duldungslehre of the Stoics, will now assist him in his return to health, one in which he relishes in thoughtfulness during the "slowest recovery" ("langsamstes Genesen"). Goethe's renewal of the self is connected to his initial moment of Bildung during his smallpox episode—in his revitalization of his interest in classical writers, he is building on a past moment of self-cultivation. Goethe's rediscovery of classical antiquity in his simultaneous recovery of his physical health and his aesthetic principles also reflects

Winckelmann's own views on the restorative nature of classical antiquity: an engagement with the "schöne Kunst" of antiquity can enrich the soul and, on a larger scale, help to bring about a liberated and healthier world.<sup>38</sup>

Goethe's revived interest in the Greeks represents a pivotal moment in the Bildungsgeschichte of an iconic writer: he is now able to discern the "distant blue mountains" ("fernen blauen Berge") that symbolize his future artistic productivity. In the renewal of the self, he has set off on an "autodidactic cycle" ("autodidaktischen Kreisgange") as he seeks out the "horizon" of his "intellectual desires" ("Horizont meiner geistigen Wünsche"). Goethe's use of the word "autodidaktisch" also implies his recognition of his independent artistic consciousness, one first discernable in his "Hang zum Nachdenken" in the aftermath of his smallpox episode and then confirmed in his childhood realization of his poetic talents. Goethe's revitalized affinity to the Greeks signifies a deepening of his knowledge of his independent artistic consciousness that will eventually lead to "distant blue mountains:" like his promising future of productivity, the mountains stand majestically in the distance; the artistic journey of his life will eventually lead him to this future greatness.

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<sup>38</sup> Kurt Wölfel associates Winckelmann with the late eighteenth-century trend of "classical republicanism" ("klassischer Republikanismus"), according to which the new citizenry of the revolutionary era would look back to the art of classical antiquity in conceiving a utopian state ("die schöne Kunst als das Symbol der Freiheit wird als Schule der Freiheit, als Bildungsinstrument des Republikaners [gedacht]" [325]). In his *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1756), Winckelmann attests to the superiority of the health of antiquity by observing that signs of smallpox were not visible in classical art, and therefore smallpox did not then exist in the classical age: "es findet sich in den Schriften der griechischen Ärzte keine Spur von Blattern, und in keines Griechen angezeigter Bildung, welche man beim Homer oft nach den geringsten Zügen entworfen siehet, ist ein so unterschiedenes Kennzeichen, dergleichen Blattergruben sind, angebracht worden" (13).

#### D. Recovery as Bildung: Love Sickness

Similar to his recovery from his hemorrhage, Goethe's recoveries from bouts of love sickness indicate his awareness of his artistic Bildungsgeschichte as a historically dynamic process. Goethe's recovery from his love sickness after losing Gretchen, his first love, directly invokes Hegel's transcendental Lebensprozeß, in which the self interacts with the Geist in a teleological progression of history: while the Hegelian dialectic informs Bildung as a dynamic process between self and world, this dialectic is directly invoked in the Gretchen episode in order to express a sublime experience of artistic growth. Goethe's healing involves a transcendental communion with nature, through which he gains an intuitive knowledge of his own artistic role within a holistic vision of world history. Goethe's later recovery from another love sickness indicates the final moment of his Bildungsgeschichte: faced with the uncertain financial prospects of marriage with Lili, a young aristocratic woman with whom he is smitten, Goethe renounces his love for her and travels to Italy, where he pursues his destiny as a fully formed artist.

As an adolescent, Goethe first experiences love sickness in connection with a larger conspiracy in which Gretchen is involved. At the end of Book Five, Goethe discovers that a group of friends have taken advantage of his artistic talents in order to counterfeit documents, converting the "letters" (*Briefe*) and "essays" (*Aufsätze*) that he helped them write into false documents ("nachgemachte Handschriften," "falsche Testamenten," and "untergeschobene Schuldscheinen" [235]). Goethe's feelings of betrayal, exacerbated by an overactive imagination under emotional strain ("ich empfand nun keine Zufriedenheit als im Widerkäuen meines Elends und

in der tausendfachen imaginären Vervielfältigung desselben" [240]), result in an "incurable sickness" (*unheilbare Krankheit*) of both body and soul (240). The towering disappointment of this episode is that Gretchen, one of the friends of this circle with whom Goethe falls in love, is lost to him. Goethe writes that "ich an Gretchens Seite deuchte mir wirklich in jenen glücklichen Gefilden Elysiums zu wandeln," however adds that after the conspiracy is found out, "leider sollte ich sie nicht wiedersehen" (233).

Goethe's recovery from the loss of Gretchen overtly signifies his Bildungsgeschichte to be a Hegelian Lebensprozeß: Goethe does not simply recognize his self as an object of Bildung, he also discerns nature as larger sublime force—or a manifestation of the Geist—with which his self interacts in a transcendental process of reflection. In Goethe's case, this transcendental process of reflection allows him to heal from his love sickness. In the beginning of Book Six, Goethes describes a prolonged period of healing after the loss of Gretchen, during which he takes walks in the nature around Frankfurt am Main. During one of these walks, he escapes to the solitude of the "woods" (*Wälder*)—where "ein armes verwundetes Herz sich [verbergen] kann"—after being overcome by a "hypochondriacal darkness" (*hypochondrischer Dünkel*). (250). Goethe then undergoes a sublime experience of communion with nature, through which he accesses the "sublime" (*das Erhabene*). Goethe reflects:

Gewiss, es ist keine schönere Gottesverehrung als die, zu der man kein Bild bedarf, die bloss aus dem Wechselgespräch mit der Natur in unserem Busen entspringt! [...] die unbestimmten, sich weit ausdehnenden Gefühle der

Jugend und ungebildeter Völker allein zum Erhabenen geeignet sind, das, wenn es durch äussere Dinge in uns erregt werden soll, formlos, oder zu unfasslichen Formen gebildet, uns mit einer GröÙe umgeben muss, der wir nicht gewachsen sind (251).

Goethe acquires a respite from his melancholy by experiencing nature as something larger than himself: as a manifestation of the Geist, Goethe recognizes the “greatness” (*GröÙe*) of nature as a sublime entity from which he is separate; however in the process of reflecting on it he becomes unified with it, as the “youth” (*Jugend*) and the “uneducated peoples” (*ungebildete Völker*) become unified with the sublime. The feeling of the sublime parallels an elevation of consciousness, or the process of reflection that transcends to the totality of knowledge in the Geist. Furthermore, Goethe refers to the emotional experiences of “Jugend” and the “ungebildete Völker” in order to emphasize the role of intuitive knowledge—rather than the more precise knowledge of the educated and experienced—in accessing the “sublime.” Within a prolonged period of recovery from love sickness, Goethe grasps an intuitive knowledge of the self—a knowledge based on “unbestimmte, sich weit ausdehnende Gefühle”—through a “Wechselgespräch mit der Natur;” in this dynamic conversation between self and nature, the self reflects, grows and heals in a transcendental Lebensprozeß. The structure of this teleological Lebensprozeß is directly invoked in order to describe Goethe’s Bildungsgeschichte as an intuitive process of learning through life experience. Goethe’s illustration of physical recovery through an engagement with nature also reflects his scientific views,

according to which the organic processes of the body are dictated by a higher power.<sup>39</sup>

Goethe's recovery from his love sickness also betrays a moment of *Bildung* within the evolution of his artistic sensibilities. Reflecting on his communion with nature as one of various "kurzen Augenblicke solcher Genüsse" that give respite from his melancholy during his period of recovery, Goethe demonstrates a more clear and objective state of mind regarding his love sickness:

Mein Herz war jedoch zu verwöhnt, als dass es sich hätte beruhigen können: es hatte geliebt, der Gegenstand war ihm entrissen [...] eine Frau, die euch bildet, indem sie euch zu verwöhnen scheint, wie ein himmlisches freudebringendes Wesen angebetet wird. Aber jene Gestalt, an der sich der Begriff des Schönen mir hervortrat, war in die Ferne weggeschwunden [...] ich fühlte einen gewaltigen Trieb, etwas Ähnliches in der Weite zu suchen (252).

In the aftermath of his communion with nature and the *Geist*, Goethe undergoes a moment of *Bildung* in which he interprets his troubled emotional state—his "verwöhntes Herz"—as deriving from a spiritual problem of his artistic

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<sup>39</sup> Peter Heusser explains that Goethe's scientific works reveal a departure from a purely mechanistic model of organic bodily processes: Goethe attempts to reconcile the animating principle of life through an expanded sense of rationality, one that recognizes the influences of a higher power. Goethe's views on chemistry reveal his attempt to understand "die Ganzheit des Menschen in ihrer Differenziertheit" through an established rationalistic scientific field. Goethe believes that: "das Chemische, Physikalische, Mechanische ist im Organismus in die höheren Struktur- und Funktionszusammenhänge des Lebendigen hineingezwungen. Das ist nur möglich, wenn die höheren Gesetze den bloss mechanischen auch kausal, das heisst als Wirkende, übergeordnet sind" (42 – 43).



temperament, rather than from the disappointment of a love affair gone sour.

Goethe now sees Gretchen as a “conception of beauty” (“Begriff des Schönen”), and he recognizes his own drive (*Trieb*) to rediscover her in his life journey of artistic pursuit. Goethe recognizes Gretchen as a woman who “educates” him (“eine Frau, die euch bildet”), directly addressing his association with her as an episode of his artistic development—he now sees that she is a muse in his artist’s eyes, a “himmlisches freudebringendes Wesen,” that he wills to recapture in art.

At the ending of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, “love sickness” is once again invoked in order to convey both Goethe’s mental destabilization, as well as his recovery from it as he fully embraces his artistic destiny; this recovery constitutes the final episode of his *Bildungsgeschichte*. In Book Seventeen, Goethe describes his friendship with Lili, a beautiful young “gentlewoman” (*Frauenzimmer*), as affectionate and passionate (“ich konnte nicht ohne sie, sie nicht ohne mich sein”) (764). When the prospect of marriage is broached, however, the reality of his insufficient middle-class financial state interferes with the serenity of the relationship (“das Bewusstsein, [meine häusliche Lage] sei auf eine Schwiegertochter eingerichtet, lag freilich zugrunde; aber auf ein Frauenzimmer welcher Art war dabei gerechnet?” [782]). In Book Twenty, the final book of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe describes his desperate mental state in the throes of his longing for Lili: “Lilis Bild schwebte mir wachend und träumend vor und mischte sich in alles andre, was mir hätte gefallen oder mich zerstreuen können” (865). The description of Lili’s image as constantly in Goethe’s consciousness, both “wachend und träumend,” resembles the “tausendfache imaginäre Vervielfältigung” of his misery in the wake of his loss of

Gretchen; in both instances, Goethe's mental state is destabilized by intrusive and obsessive thoughts that represent a recurrence of the Übel.

At the end of Book Twenty, Goethe sets out to free himself from the mental strains of the Übel by journeying to Weimar: his journey represents a recovery by giving himself over to his destiny. Goethe conceives of his future journey as "eine sanfte und artige Weise mich loszulösen" (865). In his desire to free himself from his excruciating mental despair over Lili, Goethe abandons himself to the continuation of his life without knowledge of its destination, thereby ending his *Bildungsgeschichte*. In his departure to Weimar at the very end of *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, Goethe ends the course of his nascent artistic education that constitutes the majority of his autobiography, signaling also the ending of the "Vorgeschichte des Helden" (Kittler). As an autobiography that is consciously illustrating the formative years of the iconic artist (or the Hero) in the manner of the *Bildungsroman*, Goethe's anticipated experiences in Weimar signify the beginning of a new era in Goethe's life, one in which his education has ended and he has transformed into an iconic writer and cultural figure.

Goethe's final moment of growth represents his deliverance from a new and formidable form of the Übel: as young man facing a marital prospect in which self-fulfillment stands at odds with practicality, his deliverance from the Übel requires a complete change of his circumstances. Goethe pointedly describes his conundrum with Lili as a new spiritual challenge within the context of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* itself. In summing up his life story until the end of Book Three, Goethe writes that the reader has up until now explored the philosophical dimensions of, among other

things, the “moderate” (*das Mässige*) the “beautiful” (*das Schöne*), and the “efficient” (*das Tüchtige*), which together constitute the “passender Schlußstein zu einem schon aufgemarterten zugerundeten Gewölbe.” However, Goethe admits that his experience with Lili in the fourth book marks the establishment of a completely new edifice in his life story (“man ein neues Gewölbe hätte zurichten müssen” [782]). Through his use of the word “arch” (*Gewölbe*), Goethe is referring to *Dichtung und Wahrheit* as a sort of monument in which the life story of an iconic writer is preserved. Furthermore, the fact that Goethe abandons himself to his fate, in order to release himself from love sickness and thereby reach a new edifice of his life story, attests to the dominance of the Übel as a thematic context for the growth of the self in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: the mental destabilization of a conflict between self-fulfillment and practicality finally prompts him to journey to Weimar, to regain his stabilized mindset of artistic self-fulfillment, and to realize it as finally secured in the consciousness of an iconic writer.

#### E. Smallpox Inoculation as Initiation in *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder*

The first thirteen chapters of *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder* recount various childhood memories of Schopenhauer’s family life, as well as sketches of the commercial culture of Danzig as a port city. In the fourteenth chapter, Schopenhauer describes her childhood inoculation as a moment in which her self-interests first begin to divert from historical progress. Schopenhauer expresses ambivalence toward inoculation as an instrument of Enlightenment progress: although she describes her inoculation as a brutal and humiliating procedure, she also acknowledges the procedure as a positive aspect of Enlightenment rationality. As

the chapter opens, Schopenhauer comments that she is unfortunate to have grown up in a geographical region that, in light of its popular resistance to inoculation, remained an anachronism within the cultural flowering of Germany during the later eighteenth century:

[...] im Reiche der Wissenschaft, der Kunst, der Poesie [wurden] die Geister wach. Nur in meiner Vaterstadt, und wenigstens dreissig Meilen in die Runde, blieb, mit wenigen Ausnahmen, noch Alles wie es früher gewesen [...] Die heilsamste Erfindung des achzehnten Jahrhunderts, die wohlthätige Erhalterin des Lebens zahlloser Kinder, die Inokulation der Blattern, war besonders ein Gegenstand des allgemeinen Widerwillens, gegen den alle Stimmen sich erhoben. (74)

As a major medical advancement, smallpox inoculation, the “heilsamste Erfindung des achzehnten Jahrhunderts,” is associated with the advances of Goethe and Klopstock in the literary sphere. At the same time, Schopenhauer’s allusion to the awakened “intellects” (*Geister*) of this period resonates with her allusion to the “Geist der Zeit” that denies her the right to pursue an artistic education. Despite her acknowledgment of the time period of her childhood as being positive in its cultural advancements, this progressiveness does not necessarily represent personal fulfillment, as she is to discover in her inoculation and her ensuing nerve fever. Schopenhauer describes her inoculation as a procedure that victimizes her by overcoming her and physically restraining her; this victimization symbolizes the first step in the process of restraining her unique personal development in modern

enlightened society.

Schopenhauer's smallpox inoculation (variolation) inducts her into progressive enlightened society where she experiences Bildung as a restrictive instrument of social psychology. Smallpox inoculation, while representing Enlightenment reason and Mündigkeit, also represents an initiation into the modern collective consciousness of the bourgeois citizen. According to Foucault, smallpox inoculation (variolation as well as vaccination) serves as a prime example for the manner in which eighteenth-century governments implemented statistical policies in fostering a new sense of population, which led to "normalized" understandings of the self among the middle class (*Security* 62-3).<sup>40</sup> While encouraging "normalization," the integration of variolation during the second half of the eighteenth century helped to define a modern standard of normalcy linked to modern statehood and Enlightenment health standards. Foucault's theory of a "medicine of epidemics," put forward in his *Birth of a Clinic* (1973), configures a standard for a normal healthy individual according to the statistically oriented health policies of the late eighteenth century: eighteenth-century medicine embraces

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<sup>40</sup> Foucault theorizes that, beginning around 1750, a new collective middle-class psychology arose in response to the newly evolved policies of liberal government, such as inoculation policy, according to which populations came to be regarded as natural economic phenomena that could be rationalistically and statistically analyzed. These new kinds of policies played a large role in a process Foucault refers to as "normalization"—that is, an individual's newfound conception of himself or herself based on a concept of population cultivated through statistics. This new sense of self is characterized by an internalization of the risks and probabilities that are applied to the population at large when it is statistically evaluated, and also by an awareness of how these risks and probabilities apply to you personally. Foucault explains that "security mechanisms"—the tacit psychological controls of liberal government—attempt to bring more "deviant" or "unfavorable curves of normality" in line with more favorable curves of normality, as opposed to the traditional system of discipline that simply punished a subject who fell out of line (62-3).

the “non-sick man” as the “definition of the model man;” this “non-sick man” “assumes a normative posture” that “authorizes it not only to distribute advice as to healthy life, but also to dictate the standards for physical and moral relations of the individual and of the society in which he lives” (*Birth of a Clinic*, 34). Smallpox inoculation plays a significant role in defining health “normalcy” within a broad psychological range of bourgeois collective consciousness.<sup>41</sup>

Schopenhauer’s childhood smallpox inoculation inducts her into modern adulthood as a “normal” healthy Enlightenment citizen; this induction also blocks her access to self-development and paralyzes her social mobility, thereby expressing criticism for the society into which she is being inducted. The rigors of Schopenhauer’s inoculation procedure, which she describes as “excruciating” (*leidend*), “torturous” (*quälend*) and “awkward” (*unhandlich*) (75 - 79), reveal a negative side of one’s induction into modern adulthood as an educated person: *Bildung*, as a coercive educational tool, can also mold the individual to fit within a social category and thereby paralyze one’s unique developmental course. In “Über Pädagogik,” Kant explicates the importance of restrictive discipline in laying the foundations for Enlightenment progress:

Diziplin unterwirft den Menschen den Gesetzen der Menschheit, und fängt an, ihm den Zwang der Gesetze fühlen zu lassen. Dieses muss aber frühe geschehen. So schickt man z. E. Kinder anfangs in die Schule, nicht schon in

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<sup>41</sup> Mary Lindemann attributes the popular resistance to inoculation in eighteenth-century Germany to an “inability to think in statistical terms of chances” (131). The health normalcy of modern enlightened society is founded on a rationalistic psychological disposition, in which the individual can gauge the risks of allowing oneself to be inoculated or of avoiding the procedure.

der Absicht, damit sie dort etwas lernen sollen, sondern damit sie sich daran gewöhnen mögen, still zu sitzen, und pünktlich das zu beobachten, was was ihnen vorgeschrieben wird. (698)

Kant formulates discipline as a form of control that must be administered to children in an enlightened society in order for teleological progress between generations (“eine Generation erzieht die andere”) to occur; Kant’s allusion to the need for children to “sit still” emphasizes the restrictive quality of Enlightenment Bildung, even to the point that one is inhibited from moving one’s body. Similar to Kant’s notion of children’s education, Schopenhauer’s childhood inoculation paralyzes her physical state by initiating a violent artificial smallpox illness. As a woman in a world shaped by the sexist conceptions of the modern citizen’s education, Schopenhauer’s induction into adulthood involves the recognition of Bildung as restrictive rather than liberating.

Schopenhauer’s smallpox inoculation is described as a painful, debilitating experience, reflecting both the notion of modern Bildung as an application of restrictive discipline in a modern enlightened society, as well as her personal subjective portrait of her induction into adulthood as a paralyzing process. Along with her sisters, Schopenhauer undergoes smallpox inoculation under the direction of Dr. Wolf, an English physician who travels to Danzig in order to promote inoculation (“die Verbreitung der Blatterinokulation war der Hauptzweck seiner Reise” [77]). Schopenhauer describes the procedure as a grueling experience for her and her sisters alike:

Da sassen wir nun unter freiem Himmel, wir armen kleinen Mädchen, zitternd vor Angst und Kälte [...] Ueberhaupt wurde [die Operation] mit einer unhandlichen Weitschweifigkeit ausgeführt [...] Zu jeder acht kleinen Wunden, die wir erhielten, musste neuer Eiter von den Blatterkranken geholt werden, folglich musste Herr Nixius vier und zwanzig Mal, bis zum vierten Stocke unter dem Dache des baufälligen Hauses hinauf und wieder herabsteigen. In der Hausthür nahm Florentine ihm die Nadel ab, um jeder durch ihn möglichen Gefahr der so gefürchteten innern Ansteckung vorzubeugen. (78)

According to Schopenhauer's subjective description of her inoculation procedure, she is physically restrained by fear and intimidation. Schopenhauer and her sisters are forced to sit outside "zitternd vor Angst und Kälte," where they are submitted to the infliction of numerous wounds that must be filled with smallpox "pus" (*Eiter*) from infected children quarantined nearby—the fear of "innerliche Ansteckung," or an accidental infection from the quarantined children, intimates their procedure as a treacherous trial which causes them to shiver while they endure the ordeal in a sort of paralysis. Furthermore, the image of children locked up in a nearby house alludes to the physical restrictions of incarceration, causing Schopenhauer and her sisters to feel like prisoners. This paralyzing fear of the procedure felt by Schopenhauer and her sisters also derives from a sense of intimidation from the onlookers of the scene: the girls are surrounded by the "swine" (*Ferkel*) of Danzig who, uncomprehending and disapproving of inoculation,



gaze upon Schopenhauer and her sisters with a humiliating invasiveness.

Schopenhauer expresses a feeling of humiliation deriving from a sense of being physically exposed: “dass wir dabei eine ziemliche Weile vor allen Leuten mit blossen Knieen dasitzen mussten, um das Gift eintrocknen zu lassen, war in dieser herben Stunde nicht das geringste meiner Leiden” (78). The onlookers surround the girls and immobilize them through an intimidating gaze that is also connected with an objectification of their female bodies, or their “bare knees” (*bloße Kniee*).

Schopenhauer’s opening assessment of inoculation as the “heilsamste Erfindung des achzehnten Jahrhunderts” contrasts with her subjective depiction of inoculation as a humiliating and fearful ordeal, especially one for helpless young girls who are subjected to the invasive stares of the “Ferkel;” through this contrast in tone, she is intimating that historical progress is not necessarily positive when evaluated at the level of the individual, especially women as an underprivileged segment of enlightened society. In her expression of uneasiness about being exposed to the onlookers during the procedure, Schopenhauer protests her inoculation as an instrument of female repression.

Schopenhauer’s personal experience with the complications of the inoculation procedure emphasizes her personal challenges with induction into modern adulthood; for Schopenhauer, the attack of the artificial smallpox is especially violent and traumatic. Schopenhauer explains that, following the inoculation, “Doctor Wolf sah sich zuletzt genöthigt, uns etwas Bouillon reichen zu lassen,” in order to bring about a mild form of the illness that would deliver immunity. This stage of the procedure proves especially difficult for Schopenhauer:

“von diesem Augenblick an ging es meinen Schwestern vortrefflich [...] Anders, gar anders war es mit mir; über und über mit Blattern bedeckt fühlte ich mich sehr leidend” (79). This violent outbreak of the smallpox pustules represents the worst-case scenario in the variolation procedure: that it would backfire. The depiction of the smallpox pustules as an aggressor against the little girl emphasizes the cruel violence of the inoculation procedure, as she is covered “over and over” (“über und über”) with smallpox pustules; this dramatic phrase even suggests an active period in which the pustules cover her body through the repetition of the word “über.” Schopenhauer’s struggle with the artificial smallpox procedure is depicted as a sort of rape, as she is physically restrained and attacked by the pustules that cover her “over and over,” and must endure its horrors against her will. Also similar to a rape, Schopenhauer is unfairly singled out by chance: unlike her sisters who enjoyed an uncomplicated recovery, Schopenhauer laments that “anders, gar anders war es mit mir,” emphasizing her high degree of victimhood as unique to herself within the context of her autobiography. Despite her preference for providing historical sketches, she retains for herself a special degree of victimhood, as one who not only undergoes an especially traumatic induction into the enlightened world, but also suffers the misfortune of being born into a world where her personal desires will not be realized.

#### F. Schopenhauer’s Nerve Fever

Schopenhauer’s victimization by the physically restraining effects of her inoculation is carried over into her nerve fever; taking place not long after her inoculation procedure, her nerve fever represents a prolongation of the paralysis of

her induction into adulthood as a modern enlightened citizen. Immobilized by her sickness, she is thrown into a desperate state of “boredom” (*die Langeweile*) owing to prolonged inactivity; and in attempting to break out of this state of boredom through the pursuit of an artistic education, she finds herself trapped by the sexist institutions of enlightened society, of which she is now a part after having been inoculated. Schopenhauer’s nerve fever represents a moment when she first recognizes her inner artistic self, and then recognizes it as separate from the patriarchal Bildungsgeschichte of historical progress. Following her nerve fever, Schopenhauer recognizes the ways in which sexist patriarchal institutions obstruct her artistic development.

Schopenhauer’s nerve fever, which her doctors attribute to the lingering “poison” (*Gift*) of the inoculated smallpox “pus” (*Eiter*) in her body, causes her to lie “in dumpfem, halbbewusstem Hinbrüten” for days (92). The negative aspects of the procedure, involving the dangers of the direct implantation of the virus, are invoked in the word “Gift:” Schopenhauer’s induction into adulthood involves a “poisoning” that literally debilitates her body and impedes her mobility. Aside from this physical restraint, the lingering “Gift” of inoculation also burdens Schopenhauer mentally in her recovery from the nerve fever. As opposed to Goethe’s slow, contemplative recovery in the aftermath of his hemorrhage, that of Schopenhauer in the aftermath of her near-fatal nerve fever is described as highly burdensome: “ich war wie durch ein Wunder gerettet [...] Nun aber fing meine eigentliche Qual erst an, die bei meinem sehr langsam fortschreitenden Genesen immer peinlicher mich drückte” (92 - 93). Schopenhauer observes that the most painful aspect of her recovery is the

“quälendsten Langenweile [...] Ich fühlte mit Schmerz, wie lästig ich Andern sein müsste, und war mir selbst die ungeheuerste Last” (93). The difficulty of Schopenhauer’s recovery is related to her conscious recognition of her physical state: the “torture” of her recovery results from the realization that she is bedbound and ineffectual, a “burden” (*Last*). Resulting directly from her inoculation procedure, the boredom of her recovery represents a negative mental reaction to the paralysis of her induction into the enlightened world, and therefore a criticism of this induction, as well.

As a reaction to the negative physical and mental state of boredom, Schopenhauer recognizes her inner desire to become an artist; this desire constitutes a rebellion of brash individuality against the restraints of the enlightened world. Schopenhauer’s rebellion is underscored by the connotations of her nerve fever as a decadent disease of a brashly individualistic mind: one often brings nerves upon oneself from self-absorbed thinking. As a disease of the ego, Schopenhauer’s nerve fever allows her to luxuriate in her personal desires in separation from the social practicality of the Enlightenment citizen: Schopenhauer is victim to her boredom because she, as the center of attention, should be perpetually stimulated (in her boredom, Schopenhauer complains: “doch nichts von allem, was Mutter, Freunde, Verwandte zu meiner Unterhaltung ersannen und herbeibrachten, konnte auch nur Minuten lang mir gefallen” [93]). Within the context of her nerve fever, Schopenhauer’s boredom now becomes an obstacle for one who is entitled to a life of self-fulfillment and intellectual cultivation.

Schopenhauer’s decadent nervous disease attributes her with an inner

power that brings her out of her physical and mental stagnation: “vielleicht war es jene Nervenschwäche [...] die meine Seelenkraft unbegreiflicher Weise erhöhte. Ich weiss nur, dass ich mich innerlich nie lebhafter aufgereggt gefühlt, nie nach geistiger Unterhaltung und Beschäftigung mich inniger gesehnt habe als damals” (93).

Schopenhauer’s “weakened nerves” (*Nervenschwäche*), as a physical malady associated with self-absorption, lead her to recognize the “geistige Unterhaltung und Beschäftigung” as the highest form of inner fulfillment, and the antithesis of boredom. Lavater’s portraits in his *Physiognomische Fragmente* and Chodowiecki’s *Kupferstiche*, which Schopenhauer discovers during her convalescence from her nerve fever, inspire her to become an artist, through which her inner desire for intellectual stimulation would attain fulfillment, and her boredom would be quelled: “zeichnen lernen, malen lernen, war mein höchster, einziger Wunsch” (95).

Schopenhauer’s discovery of her inner “liveliness” (*Lebhaftigkeit*) in art characterizes her nerve fever as a decadently self-centered rebellion against the lingering “Gift” of her inoculation procedure, a procedure that implements the restraining education of the modern enlightened woman.

Despite this emancipating inner discovery, Schopenhauer’s inability to realize her dream to become an artist characterizes her induction into womanhood as a paralyzation of her self-development, while her father symbolizes the patriarchal oppression that paralyzes this development. In the aftermath of her nerve fever, Schopenhauer describes her father’s rejection of her desire to pursue an artistic profession as a bitter and life-changing event: “die Art, wie diese meine Bitte aufgenommen wurde, war die erste recht bittere Erfahrung meines Lebens”

(98). Schopenhauer describes how her father “laughs” at the announcement of her plans, emphasizing his “sneering ridicule” (*spottender Hohn*) within the scope of her subjective narrative of victimization: “niemand vermag die Tiefe und Dauer der Narben zu ermessen, die [spottender Hohn] in dem jungen Herzen zurücklässt”

(99). Schopenhauer’s illustration of her father’s “spottender Hohn” reflects a highly personal moment of emotional injury, as she is scarred for life; at the same time, it is framed within the context of sexist attitudes of the late eighteenth century, of which Schopenhauer provides a historical sketch in order to convey her

“Herzensangelenheiten.” When describing her early family life in the opening chapter of *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder*, Schopenhauer comments that her father maintains a gender bias toward her and her mother, one that can be explained by the backward values of the late eighteenth century: “eine gewisse altfränkische Galanterie gegen unser Geschlecht hielt übrigens meinen Vater stets ab, sich gegen unsre Mutter merklich zu vergessen” (12). The cultural gender bias reflected in her father’s “antiquated gallantry” (*altfränkische Galanterie*) has a stagnating effect on the education of both Schopenhauer and her mother. Schopenhauer explains further that her mother received the limited education typical of late eighteenth-century

Danzig:

In Hinsicht auf das, was in unsern Tagen von Frauen und Mädchen gefordert wird, war freilich die Erziehung meiner Mutter nicht minder vernachlässigt worden, als die Mehrzahl ihrer Zeitgenossen. Ein Paar Polonaisen, ein Paar *Murkis* auf dem Klavier, ein Paar Lieder, bei denen sie selbst sich zu accompagniren wusste, Lesen und Schreiben für den Hausbedarf, das war so

ziemlich Alles, was man sie gelehrt hatte. (12 -13)

Schopenhauer's description of her mother's flimsy education reveals a disconnection from worldly affairs: her musical education reflects the eighteenth-century association of femininity with the "schönen Künsten,"<sup>42</sup> however Schopenhauer's observation that her knowledge of songs "bei denen sie selbst sich zu accompagniren wusste" also suggests that her musical knowledge was isolated to personal interest and household performances. Similarly, her ability to read and write was isolated to "household necessities" (*Hausbedarf*) as opposed to loftier literary pursuits. Schopenhauer's observations of her mother's limited education has a bearing on her own: as a child she was subject to the same biased views held by the general population on female education. In the tenth chapter of *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder*, Schopenhauer explains her experiences with elementary education as a six-year-old girl, when she first discovers her interests in the English language. Schopenhauer explains how she is discouraged from learning English as a language unbecoming of a young girl:

Ein Mädchen und Englisch lernen! Wozu in aller Welt sollte das ihr nützen?

Die Frage wurde täglich von Freunden und Verwandten wiederholt, denn die

Sache war damals in Danzig etwas Unerhörtes. Ich fing am Ende an, mich

meiner Kenntniss der englischen Sprache zu schämen, und schlug deshalb

einige Jahre später es standhaft aus, auch Griechisch zu lernen, so sehr ich es

---

<sup>42</sup> In the era of Sensibility, the influences of English moral-sense philosophy led to the conception of a female aesthetic that associated beauty with emotionality: "beauty, sentiments and women were considered interrelated, and the 'schöne Geschlecht' was served with 'schöne Literatur'" (Becker-Cantarino 21).

innerlich wünschte. (56)

Schopenhauer recognizes a general conception toward the lack of practicality regarding her knowledge of English (“Wozu in aller Welt sollte das ihr nützen?”), which is not unlike her mother’s limitations to the practical “Hausbedarf.” The backward views on the education of girls regarding language education makes a strong impression on Schopenhauer as a young girl: she shuns her own desires to learn Greek, despite that it is something that she “inwardly desired” (*innerlich wünschte*).

Schopenhauer’s discouragement from learning foreign languages is directly connected to Enlightenment theory on girls’ education. Kant theorizes that women—“das schöne Geschlecht”—possess an intellectual disposition that gravitates toward beauty, and therefore do not require, or even desire, the edification of a deeper mind: “tiefes Nachsinnen und eine lange fortgesetzte Betrachtung sind edel aber schwer, und schicken sich nicht wohl für eine Person, bei der die ungezwungene Reize nichts anders als eine schöne Natur zeigen sollen” (852). Kant refers specifically to the learning of Greek as an example of this “lange fortgesetzte Betrachtung” that contradicts women’s innate desires to express a “schöne Natur:” “Ein Frauenzimmer, das den Kopf voll Griechisch hat [...] mag nur immerhin noch einen Bart zu haben; denn dieser würde vielleicht die Miene des Tiefsinns noch kenntlicher ausdrücken, um welchen sie sich bewerben” (852). Kant’s vision of the educational program of the Enlightenment, in which there is no practical purpose for a girl to learn foreign languages, resonates with the educators



who discourage Schopenhauer from learning English and Greek. Schopenhauer's strong inner desire to learn Greek contradicts Kant's view that women instinctively desire to express a "beautiful nature" (*schöne Natur*) rather than engage in deep thinking; in this way, Schopenhauer expresses a polemic stance on Enlightenment education.

Schopenhauer's inoculation procedure and ensuing nerve fever contrast starkly with the narrative of illness recovery in *Dichtung und Wahrheit*: while Schopenhauer experiences an exclusion from enlightened society, Goethe's place in enlightened society is more strongly established by his illness recoveries, as they serve to reify his artistic identity. Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795 – 96)—the quintessential Bildungsroman—also presents the protagonist's integration into larger society through the discourse of health. *Wilhelm Meister* depicts how the eponymous hero becomes integrated into modern bourgeois society while under the observation and protection of the Tower Society (*Turmgesellschaft*). Robert Tobin portends that the Tower Society represents modern medicine as an "institution structuring the self and society:" *Wilhelm Meister* reveals how the "progressive modern medicine of its era [heals] the characters of the novel." In *Wilhelm Meister*, the Tower Society "[assumes] the mantle of health, in opposition to the many sickly characters whom Wilhelm encounters early on in his adventures" (17 – 27). Tobin's interpretation of the Tower Society in *Wilhelm Meister* reveals the way in which Bildung initiates the individual into modern healthy society as a "non-sick man"—while Goethe's illness recoveries in *Dichtung und Wahrheit* lead him down a path of artistic cultivation that establishes his membership into modern

healthy Enlightenment society, Schopenhauer's initiation into this same enlightened world consists in her denial of the very same artistic cultivation.

#### G. Between Herzensangelegenheiten and History

In contrast to the portrayal of inoculation as a difficult personal struggle and that of her ensuing nerve fever as a pivotal learning experience, the other chapters of *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder* largely describe external locations and events, such as the multinational culture of commerce in the port city of Danzig, the salon culture of Berlin, and the reactions of the French Revolution within European consciousness. Schopenhauer's preference to portray historical places and events resonates with her statement in the book's introduction that she wishes to avoid an "ausführliche Darstellung aller Ereignisse meines Lebens" in favor of external history as a topic of greater importance. Schopenhauer's acceptance of her destiny in the aftermath of her nerve fever, then, seems like a resignation of the authorial self to the narrative role she will assume in explicating the "truth" (*Wahrheit*) of a world in transition: rather than assume the identity of a dynamic artist who, like Goethe, actually creates history, Schopenhauer recognizes her subordination to it. At the same time, however, Schopenhauer's recognition of her subordination to history does not erase her subjective evaluation of it. Even her word choice of "Sittengemälde"—roughly translated as a "portrait of customs"—reflects her inner desire to become a visual artist recognized in childhood, and partly realized in adulthood as a writer who invokes visual art in her stylistic approach. This allusion to painting embodies Schopenhauer's impersonal focus on external history as the main topic of her autobiography: unlike Goethe, whose dynamic *Bildungsgeschichte*

places attention on the development of his individual self, Schopenhauer's unfolding of a "Sittengemälde" separates the individual artist from the consumption of her artistic product, in effect making her invisible; at the same time, this "Sittengemälde" has been painted as a "matter of the heart" (*Herzensangelegenheit*) and reflects her individual artistic perspective. Schopenhauer's allusion to history as a painting signifies her relationship to history as a subjective narrator: although she is not part of the scene depicted in her "Sittengemälde," she depicts it according to her own artistic vision.

This dual circumstance of Schopenhauer's narrative stance, a stance characterized by a subordination to her subject matter as a well as an omnipotent control over it, can be partially explained by a feminist analysis of women's writing in modern history. Sigrid Weigel observes that, in women's writing, a rhetoric of apologetics is often assumed when the narrator breeches her assigned place within a patriarchal literary domain: "partielle Anpassung und Unterwerfung—als Strategie, als Schutz oder auch ganz unproblematisiert als verinnerlichte Verhaltensnorm—waren zumeist der Preis, der bezahlt wurde, um an einer oder mehreren Stellen aus der Rolle zu fallen" (Weigel 89). Schopenhauer, although not quite revealing an "adaption" (*Anpassung*) and "submission" (*Unterwerfung*) to the assigned roles of patriarchy when encroaching upon the male domain of *Bildung*, does at times reveal an awareness that she has overstepped the boundaries of a woman author. When describing her realization of her inner desire to become an artist in the aftermath of her nerve fever, Schopenhauer writes that she does not immediately make her desires known: "ich schwieg, ob aus Eigensinn, oder weil ich

mich dessen schämte? Ich weiss es nicht, ich war eben ein krankes, todtmüdes Kind”

(93). Schopenhauer explains that she experiences a moral qualm in recognizing an inner desire of self-fulfillment, a recognition that perhaps causes shame.

Schopenhauer’s recognition of a childhood moral dilemma reflects a degree of self-consciousness regarding the expression of inner fulfillment for the writer looking back on the experience—even as an adult, Schopenhauer is uncertain why she chose to remain silent. The inclusion of this qualm within her childhood nerve fever experience betrays, to a degree, a need of validation for the narrator’s expression of inner fulfillment; at the same time, however, Schopenhauer is looking back on the prejudices against women during her lifespan and communicating the psychology of a child who is victim to patriarchal oppression. In this way, Schopenhauer is expressing a degree of subordination to her assigned gender role while also criticizing it.

Similarly, within the scope of her “Sittengemälde,” Schopenhauer reveals an “Anpassung und Unterwerfung” to her role as a narrator whose life development is subordinate to her subject matter, while at the same time deliberately alluding to an obscuring of the narrator’s subjective interpretation. When describing the atrocities of the Russian invasion of Danzig in 1813, for instance, Schopenhauer writes:

Alles dieses zu beschreiben, liegt eben so sehr ausserhalb des Bereiches meiner Feder, als ausserhalb des Zwecks dieser Blätter. Ich selbst litt damals nur aus weiter Ferne mit den Meinigen, Tag und Nacht von den Schreckbildern meiner Phantasie verfolgt, und diese Darstellung dessen, was Alle wirklich erduldeten, giebt nur getreulich wieder, was ich einige Jahre

später bei meiner letzten Anwesenheit in Danzig aus dem Munde sehr ehrenwerther Freunde vernahm, an deren Glaubwürdigkeit kein Zweifel obwalten kann. Memoiren sollen sich aber nur mit wörtlich Selbsterlebtem beschäftigen. (127)

Although Schopenhauer claims that an inclusion of her horrific fantasies regarding the invasion do not serve the purpose of her memoir, she is indeed communicating that these fantasies exist, and also that they have left a lasting impression on her. The fact that she visualizes horrific acts of the Cossacks speaks to her proclivities toward visual art, thereby reminding the reader of her personal artistic inclinations within the scope of her "Sittengemälde." For the sake of providing a sober account of her changing times, however, she does not include a portrayal of her fantasies. In this way, Schopenhauer reconfirms her subordination to the historical forces of her life that she reconstructs, while at the same time alluding to a fuller inner portrait of these times within her imagination that, while having no place within her memoir, exist nonetheless.

#### H. Conclusion

Schopenhauer dies in 1838, before she can finish *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder*; therefore, it is uncertain how the conclusion of the story of her life would compare with that of Goethe. Goethe's escape to Weimar at the end of *Dichtung und Wahrheit* marks the ending of the artist's education in a way that corresponds with Kittler's "Vorgeschichte des Helden" of the Bildungsroman: within the bourgeois literary discourse of the public sphere, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*

constructs the story of a historically prominent writer who controls his own development through a self-reflexive narrative; Goethe's smallpox episode constructs his initiation into adulthood as the author of his own life story, a story that itself constitutes a historical progression of German culture. Goethe's degree of control over his destiny contrasts with Schopenhauer's life story which, in its absence of control over the course of history, does not conform with the discourse of Bildung associated with the Bildungsroman. As opposed to the "Vorgeschichte des Helden" that begins with the recognition of one's control over one's destiny, and ends with the completion of the artist's education as he escapes into a new edifice in his life story, Schopenhauer's autobiography does not reveal a complete story of the "Vorgeschichte des Helden:" her initiation into adulthood during her inoculation excludes her from writing a Bildungsgeschichte of the patriarchal bourgeois discourse. Rather than initiating a story of historical development, her initiation into adulthood rather expresses a moment in which she recognizes her independent mind; this independence can already be seen in her static narrative perspective revealed in the introduction of *Jugendleben und Wanderbilder*, in which she explains her "Herzensangelegenheiten" as a protected realm of her personal artistic identity.

As opposed to Goethe, Schopenhauer does not undergo a historical development of the self in her autobiography. This contrast between Goethe and Schopenhauer in the relationship between the development of the self and the development of history suggests that Bildung, as a facet of the teleological historical development of the modern self, is a patriarchal construct. Schopenhauer's life story contradicts the Enlightenment principle that historical progress encourages the

individual's cultivation of inner truth, which in turn propels progress: as a woman, Schopenhauer's obstructed course of Bildung at the moment of inoculation—an instrument of indoctrination into progressive society—suggests gender to be a blind spot in Enlightenment thought.

## V. CONCLUSION: THE DYNAMIC “I” OF THE MODERN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

In my dissertation, I hope to have shed some light on the relationship between the modern self and the changing autobiographical forms of the eighteenth century. I attempt to address central questions concerning the study of the modern autobiography: if the emergence of the public sphere spawned a more subject-oriented mode of literary production that emphasizes the development of the individual, to what degree does the new conception of the modern individual actually contribute to the transformation of autobiography? Did the new conception of the modern self of the mid-eighteenth century dynamically alter literary forms?

Other scholars of autobiography have attempted to understand the relationship between autobiographical formalism and the modern self by establishing more concrete criteria for the designation of genres. Pascal, for example, ultimately designates the “autobiography” as a “dynamic” representation of the modern self, in which a more intensive engagement with one’s sense of individuality results in the creation of a “coherent story” from one’s life experiences (8-10). Similarly, Bernd Neumann creates the category of the “role-player” memoir as a means to differentiate stories of inner individual development from static life narratives across history: while Augustine’s *Confessions* provides the first modern autobiography of self-development, Casanova’s memoirs, written fourteen centuries later, demonstrates a static self through the representation of the predetermined social role of libertine adventurer (3).

Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow (*Das erinnerte Ich*, 1974) addresses the problem



more directly. For Wuthenow, the dynamic “I” of the modern autobiography is not contingent on new conceptions of selfhood; the expression of the dynamic “I” would be possible in much earlier forms autobiography, as the prerequisites of autobiographical production—namely, the ability to engage in “self-observation” (*Selbstbeobachtung*), a “critical distance” (*kritischer Abstand*) from oneself, and the consciousness of life as a “unrepeatable” experiences—are already present as literary “approaches” (*Ansätze*) in the late antiquity (22). According to Wuthenow, the dynamic “I” of the modern autobiography arises from the author’s creative engagement with the eighteenth-century autobiographical trend of relating one’s life in autobiography. Due to the impossibility of totally reconstructing one’s life in literature, the eighteenth-century autobiographer necessarily relies on a dynamic creative representation (“eine vollständige Rekonstruktion des Lebens ist so unmöglich wie eine vollständige, erschöpfende Konstruktion des Ich. Von hierher erklärt sich der dynamische Charakter der autobiographischen [Selbsterhellung]” [Wuthenow 18 – 19]). For Wuthenow, the author’s past becomes the object of a dynamic, creative portrayal of the self within the author’s “consciousness of recollection” (“im erinnernden Bewusstsein” [Wuthenow 18 -19]). Wuthenow’s views suggest that, historically, autobiographical forms have dictated the limits of self-expression, as opposed to the view that the new conceptions of modern selfhood of the mid-eighteenth century demonstrate a power over autobiographical forms, as these forms are altered through a stronger emphasis on individuality and one’s individual development throughout life.

In my dissertation, I give evidence that the latter view is closer to the truth.

In examining episodes of childhood smallpox illness as experiences of modern inner selfhood that, in some cases, also initiate stories of unique development (*Bildung*), I locate a common point of analysis through which a variety of formalistic transformations of modern autobiography can be examined. By expressing experiences of modern selfhood, smallpox imagery reveals the numerous ways in which eighteenth-century autobiographical forms are transformed by modern subjectivity. The static narrative of the political memoir becomes modernized by smallpox: Wilhelmine's experience of inner reflection during her smallpox episode allows her to engage more deeply in personal themes of her life story, enabling a transformation from an observational memoir into a more pronounced story of individuality; similarly, the observational memoir of Katharina II—a courtly memoir of upper-class life experience—is able to adopt the structure of the middle-class *Bildungsgeschichte* through the assertion of smallpox immunity. Through its association with the narrative of conversion as a literary trope of inner selfhood, smallpox imagery also reveals how experiences of inner transformation can spawn a range of autobiographical narrative structures: not only can the narrative of conversion initiate a *Bildungsgeschichte* through a correspondence with themes relating to the author's personal life story (as seen in Bronner's autobiography), it can also infiltrate the episodic structure of the role-player memoir (Casanova) and provide a singular moment of self-growth in a narrative in which growth does not normally take place. Finally, smallpox imagery reveals the ways in which the author's heightened awareness of his individuality—evident in Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*—allow him to construct his life story as historical progress.

*Jugendleben und Wanderbilder* reveals yet another deviation from a formalistic structure of autobiography: Schopenhauer's initiation into modern enlightened society, symbolized by her inoculation procedure, allows her to both acknowledge the Bildungsgeschichte as an enlightened principle of historical progress through self-cultivation, and also to renounce it, thereby exhibiting a power of the subject over the formalistic structure of the self-reflexive autobiography. In my dissertation, I hope to have successfully proven that German autobiography can be situated within the Western phenomenon of modern autobiography, in which new conceptions of selfhood demonstrate a creative power over autobiographical forms during a period in which these forms were in a state of change.

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