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The Cambridge Companion to German Romanticism

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Women writers and Romanticism

Anyone concerned to discover the truth about women writers in Germany around 1800 needs to resolve some thorny problems of literary historiography. If, for example, one takes the five women portrayed by Margarete Susman in her influential volume *Schriftstellerinnen der Romantik* (1929; *Women Writers of Romanticism*) – Caroline Schlegel (1763–1805), Dorothea Schlegel (1763–1839), Rahel Varnhagen (1771–1833), Karoline von Günderode (1780–1806) and Bettine von Arnim (1785–1859) – there is no doubt that they have many features in common. All five were born within twenty years of one another, and their careers more or less overlapped with those of the male Romantics. But these women, unlike the men, belonged to no school or group with a defined literary programme. Nor did they think of themselves in that way. Although all these women were linked with the leading literary circles of the day, their actual relationships were wholly individual, mainly of a deeply personal character, and only rarely did they include the literary activities of the other women. Some were linked by friendship, like Bettine von Arnim and Karoline von Günderode or Dorothea Schlegel, Henriette Herz and Rahel Varnhagen. But some were bound only by critical distance or even total rejection.

If one then includes other women writers and publicists around 1800 – Benedikte Naubert (1756–1819), Philippine Gatterer (1756–1831), Henriette Herz (1764–1847), Therese Huber (1764–1828), Margarete Forkel (1765–1856), Johanna Schopenhauer (1766–1838), Sophie Mereau (1770–1806), Caroline de la Motte-Fouqué (1773–1831) and Wilhelmine von Chézy (1783–1856) – the picture becomes still more confusing, and attempts to discern meaningful groupings still more problematic. What, other than their female sex and the circumstance that each in her own way participated in the literary life of the age, do these women writers have in common? In fact there was one thing. All of them belonged to the still young – third-generation – tradition of writing women in eighteenth-century Germany, even if not all explicitly thought of themselves as woman

writers, authors or poets. Their family histories hint at the importance of genealogy here. Helmina von Chézy was the granddaughter of the poet Anna Louisa Karsch (1722–91), and Bettine von Arnim of Sophie von La Roche (1730–1807). The women of 1800, therefore, had predecessors and models stretching back to the Enlightenment.¹ Without this pre-history it is doubtful whether these writers, with their characteristically intensive participation in the literary life of the day, would ever have made their appearance on the public stage.

Many of them became ‘women of the Romantic School’ only thanks to the constructions of literary historians 100 years later. Their contemporary Heinrich Heine recognizes no such grouping. In his *Die romantische Schule* (1832; *The Romantic School*) he mentions only one text by a woman, Dorothea Schlegel’s novel *Florentin* (1801).² Even in Rudolf Haym’s massive eponymous study women play only bit parts.³ The literary histories of the nineteenth century tell the same story: if these women played any role at all, then it was only insofar as they were linked with a well-known man, as, for example, were the women of the Jena Romantic circle or those around Goethe. It was Ricarda Huch’s studies in Romanticism which changed the picture. Her *Die Romantik* (1899–1902, *Romanticism*) is packed with information about women such as Caroline Schlegel, Bettine von Arnim and Dorothea Schlegel. She specifically foregrounds both their intellectual achievement and links with Romanticism.⁴ For Huch Romanticism is an attitude of mind and a *Weltanschauung*, registered seismographically in literature and philosophy. As an ‘intellectual orientation’ Romanticism is for her anti-naturalistic and cerebral, in that it seeks to penetrate beyond mere appearance. Huch gives special weight to the movement’s modernity as a foil to the aspirotuality and technocentrism of her own day. After the ‘wholesale rejection’ of Romanticism in the first half of the nineteenth century Huch hoped that Romanticism would be regenerated in her own time.⁵

Susman’s *Frauen der Romantik* of 1929 carries on in many respects where Huch’s work left off, as when she notes the tense relationship of the present time with Romanticism. She views early Romanticism as the first phase of a comprehensive renewal of German intellectual culture, particularly with regard to the existential problems posed by religion, death and love in their personal dimension. Early Romanticism, for her, is a particular form of self-understanding, of creatively intensified self-consciousness, which in the last analysis paradoxically cannot help us live our lives. The women writers of Romanticism, she says, sought with vital intensity and in many individual variations to live this unliveable ideal, transformed it into a typical style and at last made it practicable: ‘The greatness of Romantic Woman lies in the fact that while opening herself wholly to the spirit she

nevertheless did not succumb.’⁶ In five, chronologically sequenced chapters, ‘Caroline’, ‘Dorothea’, ‘Rahel’, ‘Bettine’ and ‘Karoline von Günderrode’, she paints portraits of these select women, classifying them according to the *Gestalt* typology used by the circle around Stefan George, to which she belonged. Thus Caroline Schlegel was the woman of history, Dorothea a woman unsure of her religion, Rahel Levin the problematic woman, Bettine the creative woman and Günderrode the woman of antiquity. Today such a typology fails to convince. It overlooks the intricate overlapping of qualities as much as the contingencies and ruptures of real life. Furthermore Susman, who liked to ascribe ‘male’ attributes to Rahel and ‘female’ ones to Dorothea, fails to recognise to what extent rigid gender stereotypes were being questioned around 1800⁷ – even if many women in everyday life still had to conform to received expectations in performing their role. But Susman takes credit as the first to see these women as a group, to grasp the differentiation of female biographies of the day, and set them in the context of intellectual history. Indeed, her sensitivity to the significance of love, death and religion in the life of these women adumbrates themes which today are in the forefront of scholarly inquiry.

In the last thirty years scholarly attention has focused on the social and gender questions overlooked by Susman. Extensive research has been conducted into the position of women around 1800, and biographies or literary-historical studies exist of most of these women writers.⁸ In her *Schriftstellerinnen der Romantik* (2000; *Women Writers of Romanticism*) Barbara Becker-Cantarino has produced a literary handbook which draws the sum of research in this area to date. Following her work on women writers and poets in Germany from 1500, she retraces the women’s steps on ‘the long road to equality’ and authorship.⁹ She traces the social context of epistolary culture and the literary salon, and offers model analyses of four women writers’ work, notably Therese Huber’s novel *Die Familie Seldorf* (1795–6; *The Seldorf Family*) and Dorothea Schlegel’s *Florentin*. Günderrode is examined in the context of her importance for poetry and mythology, Bettine von Arnim in the context of her book on Günderrode and its poetics. Becker-Cantarino then tracks the reception of these women in the twentieth century, for example in Hanna Arendt’s *Rahel Varnhagen* (195–9) and Christa Wolf’s *Kein Ort: Nirgends* (1979; *No Place on Earth*). As the chronology which concludes her volume suggests, ‘women writers of Romanticism’ were active from 1762 until 1840, from the year of the Enlightenment writer Luise Gottsched’s death to the year in which Bettine von Arnim’s *Die Günderrode* appeared. As this synopsis makes clear, the women writers of Romanticism need to be assessed in a far broader context of cultural history if we are truly to understand the particular quality of

their literary activities. We should however orientate ourselves far less than Becker-Cantarino around received concepts of literary genre. To focus exclusively on the lyric and the novel, for example, marginalises writers of 1800 like Rahel Varnhagen, Caroline Schlegel and Henriette Herz, those ‘women writers without an *oeuvre*’.¹⁰ What they record in letters, conversations and journals reveals much about the tension between tradition and modernity which defines their experience. For example, Rahel Varnhagen’s letters, quite apart from their pragmatic informativeness about her contemporaries, enable us to reconstruct the mentality of an entire epoch as mirrored in their self-reflexive, playful, experimental trains of thought. Her letters also give us insight into the conditions under which a Jewish woman had to live around the turn of the eighteenth century in a markedly Christian society – what it meant to be perceived as Jewish and to be confronted with a whole range of preconceptions and prejudices.¹¹ Something similar is true of Dorothea Schlegel’s letters. Amongst many other things, they disclose the private motivations of her inner, religious development, which was in no sense prompted by external considerations.

The letters and journals edited over the last decade are more than mere ego documents or sources for the literary life of the age. Read correctly, they reveal the conditions under which these women become authors qualified to participate in literary life. The formula ‘Romantic women’ we should understand as a tendentially open concept, connoting the commonly shared and changed conditions of literary life and not strictly the intellectual sense of conforming to a like ‘attitude of mind’.

The work of these writing women is difficult to fit into the context of genre-centred literary history. Work in genres such as the lyric, the drama, the novel and smaller epic forms such as the fairy tale does exist, but what claims our attention are primarily letters, correspondence and journals. On the one hand, we find Günderrode’s lyric poems, which follow classical models and forms, and her drama *Mahomet* (1803), which is indebted to the Orientalist fashion. Or we find Therese Huber’s narratives, which delineate the shapes and foreground the conflicts of women’s lives.¹² Both women follow completely different notions of writing and literature. On the other hand we find epistolary novels by Bettine von Arnim such as *Goethe’s Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde* (1835; *Goethe’s Correspondence with a Child*), Günderrode and Clemens Brentanos *Frühlingskranz* (1844; *A Vernal Wreath for Clemens Brentano*), in all of which she interweaves authentic letters with fiction. These contrast with *Dies Buch gehört dem König* (1843; *This Book Belongs to the King*), a committed socio-political tract directed at King William IV of Prussia. The ‘Romantic’ Bettine von Arnim is the prime example of the difficult relation between Romanticism

and late Romanticism, since she in no way shares the fundamentally conservative attitude of the late Romantics, and with her democratic convictions in many respects ought to be categorized with the *Vormärz* (the radical epoch preceding March 1848).¹³

This contradictory outcome, both in respect of the genres deployed by women and of their 'attitude of mind', points to further problems in the literary historiography of women, which can only be resolved by examining our multi-faceted concept of Romanticism in the light of recent debates on the relation between gender and canonicity.¹⁴ The women authors of the epoch around 1800 by no means always appeared before the public under their own name (if indeed they risked such a step at all). Dorothea Schlegel, for example, chose to publish anonymously. So, for a time, did Therese Huber, who published under a very rare type of pseudonym, that of her second husband, the well-known writer Ludwig Ferdinand Huber. Sophie Mereau published her first novel, *Das Blüthenalter der Empfindung* (1794; *The Flowering of Sentiment*), anonymously. Thereafter, however, she used her real name in full. Johanna Schopenhauer and Bettine von Arnim only ever published work under their own names. Whilst Günderrode published her first volume *Gedichte und Phantasien* (1804; *Poems and Fantasias*) under the pseudonym 'Tian', Bettine von Arnim published *Die Günderrode* thirty-six years later under her own name. It still remains to be explained from case to case why some women renounced the possibility of publishing under their own name. The frequent changes of name occasioned by marriage, remarriage after divorce or death or the assumption of a Christian name, in fact conceal fractured life paths, and these in turn disclose women's true state between conformity and transgression. Many marriages were arranged between friends or neighbours of a family on the basis of 'enlightened barter of females'. The first change of name followed that.

Gender and, in the wider sense, educational factors are important in one further respect in the lives of the women writers treated here. Their careers and writing activities are inconceivable without the intellectual and literary inspiration they received in different measure either in the parental home, in a foundation for well-born spinsters (Günderrode's case), or through a grandmother (Sophie von La Roche in Bettine von Arnim's case). The increasing participation of the middle class in cultural and literary affairs and public discussion in the second half of the eighteenth century is nowhere more evident than in its daughters, precisely because they had no access to the official education in the grammar school, university and academy. In the eighteenth century it was the Protestant Pastor's household which permitted access to education and sophisticated language for a significant number of sons who went on to write, but not for their daughters.¹⁵ Since women had

no right of entry to educational institutions, they received their education through private tutors or resorted to alternatives.

The lyric poet Philippine Gatterer, for example, had by her own account, as far as poetry was concerned, grown up ‘wie ein wilder Baum ohne Pflege’ (‘like a tree in nature, without training’).¹⁶ But this should be taken as a stylisation which runs through her entire oeuvre. In his letters Gottfried August Bürger would attempt to lecture her on taste, and she presents herself in her responses as a woman poet following her poetic vein only under pressure. Nonetheless the beginnings of an independent notion of poetry can be discerned. The antique dactylic hexameters of her short lyric ‘An die Muse’ (‘To the Muse’), for example, begin with an invocation of the Muses’ support, and end:

Verlängern die Parzen mir nur, mit ihren oft drohenden Händen
Den Faden des Lebens, der kaum erst entstand;
So tret’ ich, voll Schüchternheit, einst zur hohen Versammlung der Dichter;
Und weihe den fühlenden Schwestern mein Lied.¹⁷

If only the Fates, with their so frequently ominous hands
Do lengthen the thread of my life, so recently spun out,
Then of modesty full shall I rise to that high convention of poets;
And to feeling sisters dedicate my song

The modesty *topos* here evident, which dominates both the lyric and autobiographical testimony of this writer, in fact conceals that she was both a learned and skilled woman poet who confidently exploited the possibilities of the classical metres introduced into German by Klopstock – even if she lacked the classical education which her famous male peers in the Göttinger Hain School had been privileged to enjoy.

Intertextual readings allow us to reconstruct precisely which literary models made their way into the novel production of women authors. Margareta Forkel’s *Maria* (1782)¹⁸ can serve as the example. Forkel, probably the youngest debutant women novelist in German literature, published this multi-perspectival epistolary novel in her eighteenth year. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg commented: ‘Eine Gans unsrer Stadt, die Frau des Musik Director Forkel hat einen Roman ... drucken lassen’¹⁹ (‘A silly young goose from our city, the wife of Music Director Forkel, has published ... a novel’). This novel reveals its author’s close familiarity with the contemporary fashion of the letter novel, from Samuel Richardson to Sophie von La Roche’s *Das Fräulein von Sternheim* (1769; *Lady Sternheim*) and Goethe’s *Werther* (1774). The particular fascination of her novel lies in how a mere girl of eighteen writes in enlightened and sentimental style *against* the excesses of sentimentality, against what was then known as the *Werther* fever. Individual

letters contain extensive reflections on the education of small children and girls, the relations of the sexes and the balance of reason and emotion. That said, the novel's unfolding plot leaves no doubt as to the different destinies of women and men in society. Woman's domain is the home: weddings, wedlock and family. Should that mechanism fail, she may become an educator of her own sex. The sphere of professional activity is left to men. Margareta Forkel was also a spirited and witty contributor to contemporary debates on literature and music. Johann Heinrich Voß had in the course of the translation of Homer arrived at the conclusion that the Greek letter ε ('eta') should be pronounced not as 'eh' but as 'aay', a view which launched a heated controversy. Forkel comments by putting this into the mouth of a character in *Maria*: 'Lustig, diesen gelehrten Streitigkeiten beizuwohnen und zu sehen, wie sich diese Leute mit den wichtigsten Mienen der Welt über Kleinigkeiten zanken, die anderen nicht einmal der Rede werth scheinen'²⁰ ('Amusing to witness these scholarly disputes and see how people quarrel so pompously about trivia which others deem unworthy of a word').

Dorothea Schlegel's *Florentin*, by contrast, is cast in the mould of early Romantic poetics and displays many and various intertextual nods to models of the Romantic literary canon such as Cervantes's *Don Quixote* or Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. *Florentin* mixes diverse literary genres such as the dialogue and song, and presents the life-story of the central figure over several chapters as an autobiographical confession. As an artist's novel with a painter hero, it is full of self-reflexive passages on art, literature and painting.

Private letters too are a significant resource, both for identifying the reading material of women writers and as documents of cultural history. Caroline Michaelis (later the wife of A. W. Schlegel and subsequently Schelling) has become justly renowned for the influence of her correspondence, letters which reveal an intuitive skill in her deployment of both French and German. Her letters also document her reading, which includes everything of contemporary repute in German, English or French literature, especially anything by Goethe. She comments on Goethe's play *Die Geschwister* (1776; *Brother and Sister*): 'Schade daß Goethe, der so ganz herrlich so ganz hinreißend schreibt, so sonderbare Gegenstände hat; und doch kan ich weder seinen Werther, noch Stella noch die Geschwister unnatürlich nennen, es ist so romanhaft, und liegt doch auch so ganz in der Natur, wenn man sich nur mit ein bischen Einbildungskraft hineinphantasirt'²¹ ('A pity that Goethe, who writes so absolutely delightfully and so absolutely compellingly, chooses such peculiar subjects; and yet I can call neither his Werther nor his Stella nor his Brother and Sister unnatural, it is all so novelistic and yet so well founded in nature, if only one feels one's way

into it with a little imagination'). Caroline Michaelis's letters also shed much light on her self-understanding: 'Ich bin,' she writes as a fifteen-year-old Göttingen professor's daughter, 'keine Schwärmerin, keine Enthousiastinn, meine Gedanken sind das Resultat von meiner, wenn möglich ist, kalten Überlegung'²² ('I am no zealot, no enthusiast, my thoughts are the result of my own, where possible, cold reflection'). Enthusiasm and zealotry are key concepts of the contemporary discussion on enlightenment and sentimentality. Another is friendship, which crops up again and again in her letters without ever descending into the lurid friendship cult of the *Sturm und Drang* or the sentimentality of writers like Gleim: 'Vielleicht sind meine Begriffe von der Freundschaft zu ausgedehnt, und ich begreife die Liebe mit drunter, doch wirklich verlieben werde ich mich gewiß nie (denn was ich bisher dafür hielt, war nur Täuschung meiner selbst, ich entsagte diesen Hirngespinsten mit so weniger Mühe)'²³ ('Perhaps my notions of friendship are too broad, and I include love in them, yet I will certainly never fall in love (what I had till now thought it to be was but self-delusion, I abandoned those frenetic delusions with so little effort)'). Elsewhere she says she has tasted 'alle Freuden eines glücklichen Bewußtseyns' ('all the joys of a happy state of mind') and adds: 'Noch erwarten mich gute Tage, schöne mannigfache Auftritte von Glück'²⁴ ('Good days, many fine scenes of happiness, are still to come'). From such passages in the letters one can see that exemplary expressions of what has often, over-hastily, been categorized as 'Romantic' in fact presupposes Enlightenment – in the shape of the rational analysis of sentiment and its translation into what is here called a 'state of mind'. Precisely these women writers reveal that the so-called Romantics are still bound by many ties to the Protestant Enlightenment, which by 1794 are only beginning to be loosened.²⁵

Before her marriage to Huber, the then Therese Heyne also confesses that from an early age she read everything which came into her hands. Her father, the renowned classical philologist Christian Gottlob Heyne, even asked her to write literary critiques. Once, the young poet Friedrich von Ramdohr had sent her father his tragedy *Otto III*, with a request for a thorough review. In a letter of 1782 to her friend Luise Mejer, Therese Heyne relates what then transpired: 'Papa konte nicht. Mama wolte nicht. Ich habs Gelesen, einen ganzen Bogen voll geschrieben, an Kritik, Papa traut meinem Urtheil genug, sich ganz danach zu richten ... Man wird mich nicht nennen ... aber es ist herrliche Uebung und meines Vaters Zutraun schmeichelhaft; daß ich das Urtheil gemacht darf keiner wissen'²⁶ ('Papa couldn't do it. Mama didn't want to do it. I read it through, wrote pages and pages of criticism, Papa trusts my judgement enough to follow it completely ... I shall not be named ... but it is splendid practice and my father's trust flatters me; none

may know that I wrote this opinion'). Thus she speaks in her father's name and he acknowledges her literary judgement as his own. Here, as if under experimental conditions, one sees how the literary socialisation of young women authors became possible in professorial households. Small wonder that Goethe's *Werther* or *Götz von Berlichingen* failed to please Therese Heyne. She was concerned about their moral effect on her peers: 'Ich sah die Menschen thörigt drum werden, las es fand die nachteiligen Sachen und blieb unbethört' ('I saw people deluding themselves with them, read them [,] found the matter suspect and remained undeluded'). In this same letter she describes how she heard of and was made familiar with the various disciplines in her professorial home. Looking back over her early reading, she notes that it even included theology: 'Ich las freigeisterische Schriften, ich las dogmatische ohne Glaubenszweifel, ohne Kirchenglauben, Gott, Unsterblichkeit, Pflichterfüllung fand ich überall wo gebildete Menschheit war'²⁷ ('I read freethinking works, I read dogmatic ones with no hint of doubt, [and] no faith in the Church[;] God, immortality, fulfilment of duty I found wherever educated persons dwelt').

Those who examine the participation of Romantic women writers in literary life around 1800 find them positioned at the margin of a society in flux. The women who took part in literary societies, circles and salons came from very different backgrounds: Christian and Jewish, aristocratic and middle-class. And there they met men of very different origins: literati, officials, military, aristocracy. Social exchange such as this, transcending sex and class, was something new and broke convention. Barely fifty years before no woman had taken part in the famous Wednesday Club meetings in Berlin with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn and Friedrich Nicolai. But even around 1800 the social and legal position of women was marked by inequality. Hence it is revealing that in the wide-ranging debate of the day on the anthropological status of women the aim was less to remove inequalities than renew them on foot of the cultural practices allegedly demanded by women's biology. Claudia Honegger has argued that this debate, which covered pedagogy, philosophy and anthropology, and was one of the widest-ranging controversies of the eighteenth century, is ultimately centred on the issue of the 'order of the sexes'.²⁸ It gives the context in which many women had to search for self-understanding as both woman and author. It echoes throughout this letter from Dorothea Schlözer to another girl, Luise Michaelis: 'Liebes Mädchen, ich will Dir Vieles beichten, was wir 15 jährigen Mädchen sonst in der Welt nie so früh erfahren, und auch in keinem Buche steht, was ich aber schon seit mehreren Jahren unter vier Augen von guter Hand habe: Weiber sind nicht in der Welt, blos um Männer zu amüsieren. Weiber sind Menschen wie Männer'²⁹ ('Dear girl, I have much to confess

that we fifteen-year-old girls normally do not soon discover in the world, and which is also not in any book, but which I received several years ago in confidence from a good source: women are not in the world simply to amuse men. Women are people as much as men'). In one fell swoop these lines make plain just how unorthodox the insight, that 'women are people as much as men', was at the end of the eighteenth century. Years later, Luise Michaelis (the younger sister of Caroline Schlegel) was to recall this letter, alluding in her memoirs to 'einen sehr merkwürdigen Brief' ('a very remarkable letter'), which expressed so many things in such a fashion that 'ich mich schämte, den Brief zu zeigen' ('I was ashamed to show it to anyone else').³⁰

But the relation of the sexes around this time cannot adequately be described as repression or subjugation – even if the signs of inequality are everywhere. Even if some women, mindful of what was held to be 'masculine' or 'feminine', did share the traditional perspectives and opinions, we cannot always call this the mere internalisation of norms. Irrespective of the gender debates which seek for theoretical clarity, the relationship of the sexes is informed by complex *a priori* stances and attitudes which are best studied as a phenomenon *de longue durée* in the history of mentalities. This becomes clear in exemplary fashion in a letter of Therese Huber thanking her father for his friendly verdict on one of her works: 'Das gütige Urtheil welches Sie über mein Talent als Autor fällen, hat mich weinen machen, wie im achtzehnten Jahre ... Weiblicher ging wohl nie ein Weib von der, ihrem Geschlechte vorgeschriebenen, und es allein beglückenden Bahn ab; als ich'³¹ ('The kind judgement you pass on my talent as an author made me weep like a girl of eighteen. No woman ever yet left the path prescribed for her sex as the sole way to happiness in a more womanly fashion; than I'). Therese Huber's view of her role circumscribes the horizon of her age. Care for the family is 'feminine', is her 'prescribed path'. She can only justify her writing to her father – and herself – because she wrote and published in order to care for the material well-being of the family. Following Huber's death in 1804, her publications remained mainly anonymous. Only after 1811 did she write under her own name.³²

A more detailed look at the concrete relationships of the sexes uncovers a telling comparison between Therese Huber and Karoline von Günderrode. In Günderrode's correspondence with the philologist Friedrich Creuzer on their respective literary productions, we find from her discussions both of her poetic works and confessions of affection and yearning. She asks him only to correct her work and give scholarly advice. He, however, the scholar by profession, requires for *his* work both an intellectual response from her God-given understanding ('aus dem ewigen Verstehen das Dir ein Gott gegeben Erkenntnis u Licht für mich zu schöpfen' ['from the eternal

understanding given you by God to acquire knowledge & light for me']³³ and sympathy. That scholarship is connoted 'masculine' by both Creuzer and Günderrrode is unsurprising. Here, then, we have an exchange between equal intellectual and even emotional partners. Therese Huber, by contrast, always (at least during her husband's life) saw herself as the one who provided work for him, who attempted to insert her writing into *his* oeuvre.

The last word may be given to Friedrich Schlegel, who wrote this about his later sister-in-law, Caroline Böhmer (née Michaelis): 'Die Überlegenheit ihres Verstandes [sc.: über den meinigen] habe ich sehr frühe gefühlt. Es ist mir aber noch zu fremd zu unbegreiflich, daß ein *Weib* so sein kann, als daß ich an ihre Offenheit, Freiheit von Kunst recht fest glauben könnte'³⁴ ('The superiority of her intellect [sc.: to mine] was soon palpable. But it is still too strange, too incomprehensible for me that a *female* can be thus[,] so that I cannot yet firmly accept her openness, her freedom from artifice'). Here the astonishment these women of letters occasioned in their masculine peers is still obvious. The received notions of 'masculine' and 'feminine' are questioned, and in response men are compelled to register the insecurity of their own role.

NOTES

1. Any literary-historical account of women authors would have to begin with Hrosvitha von Gandersheim and include women authors from 1400 to 1700. It would, however, encounter one major difficulty: the lack of intra-literary connections between these writers. Compare Barbara Becker-Cantarino, *Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit: Frauen und Literatur in Deutschland von 1500 bis 1800* (Munich: dtv, 1987).
2. See Heine, *Die romantische Schule*, in *Werke und Briefe*, ed. Hans Kaufmann, 10 vols. (Berlin: Aufbau, 1961), vol. VII, p. 64.
3. See Rudolf Haym, *Die Romantische Schule: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Deutschen Geistes* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1961; 1st edn, Berlin 1870).
4. See Ricarda Huch, *Romantik*, in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Wilhelm Emrich, 11 vols. (Cologne: Kiepenhauer und Witsch, 1969), vol. VI: *Literaturgeschichte und Literaturkritik*, pp. 17–646, esp. pp. 45f.
5. All references: *ibid.*, p. 21.
6. See Margarete Susmann, *Frauen der Romantik*, ed. Barbara Hahn (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1996), p. 10.
7. See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 64–98.
8. On this: Barbara Becker-Cantarino, *Schriftstellerinnen der Romantik: Epoche – Werk – Wirkung* (Munich: Beck, 2000), pp. 19–42.
9. Compare Becker-Cantarino, *Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit*.
10. The phrase is Barbara Hahn's. See *Von Berlin nach Krakau: Zur Wiederentdeckung von Rahel Levin Varnhagens Korrespondenz* (Berlin: Zentraleinrichtung von Frauenstudien und Frauenforschung an der Freien Universität Berlin, 1989), p. 3.

11. See Heidi Thomann Tewarson, 'Jüdinsein um 1800: Bemerkungen zum Selbstverständnis der ersten Generation assimilierter Berliner Jüdinnen', in *Von einer Welt in die andere: Jüdinnen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, eds. Jutta Dick and Barbara Hahn (Vienna: Christian Brandstätter, 1993), pp. 47–70.
12. Huber, while she argues that men are in any case unsuitable for the role of chief protagonist in a novel, is also persuaded that no woman could possibly describe the passions which drive the male. See Huber, 'Kann eine Romandichterin Männer schildern, und ist ein Mann zum Romanhelden zu brauchen?', in *Die reinste Freiheitsliebe, die reinste Männerliebe: Ein Lebensbild in Briefen und Erzählungen*, ed. Andrea Hahn (Berlin: Henssel, 1989), pp. 213–16, here p. 215.
13. Compare Hartwig Schultz's article 'Arnim, Bettine von', in *Literaturlexikon: Autoren und Werke deutscher Sprache*, ed. Walter Killy, 12 vols. (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1988–92), vol. I, pp. 214–16, here p. 215.
14. See Renate von Heydebrandt, Simone Winko, 'Arbeit am Kanon: Geschlechterdifferenz in Rezeption und Wertung von Literatur', in *Genus: Zur Geschlechterdifferenz in den Kulturwissenschaften*, eds. Hadumond Bußman and Renate Hof (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1995), pp. 206–61.
15. Compare the tradition of pastors' sons in German literary history after the seventeenth century as reconstructed by Albrecht Schöne, *Säkularisation als sprachbildende Kraft: Studien zur Dichtung deutscher Pfarrersöhne*, 2nd edn (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968; 1st edn 1958).
16. Philippine Gatterer to Gottfried August Bürger, 13 September 1777, in *Gottfried August Bürger und Philippine Gatterer: Ein Briefwechsel aus Göttingens empfindsamer Zeit*, ed. Erich Ebstein (Leipzig: Dieterichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1921), p. 35.
17. Philippine Gatterer, *An die Muse*, in *Gedichte von Philippine Gatterer*, vol. I (Vienna and Prague: Hass, n.d.), pp. 49–52, here p. 51.
18. [Margareta Forkel,] *Maria: Eine Geschichte in Briefen* (Leipzig: Weidmann und Reich, 1782).
19. Georg Christoph Lichtenberg to Friedrich Nicolai, 20 March 1785, in Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Briefwechsel*, eds. Ulrich Joost and Albrecht Schöne, 4 vols. (Munich: Beck, 1990), vol. III: 1785–1792, p. 69.
20. Forkel, *Maria*, p. 45.
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22. Caroline Michaelis to Luise Stieler, 7 October 1778, *ibid.*, p. 7.
23. Caroline Michaelis to Luise Gotter, 1 November 1781, *ibid.*, p. 57.
24. Caroline Michaelis to Luise Gotter, 23 October 1782, *ibid.*, p. 67.
25. Compare Ulrich Barth, 'Ästhetisierung der Religion – Sakralisierung der Kunst: Wackenroders Konzept der Kunstandacht', in *Aufgeklärter Protestantismus* (Tübingen: Mohr und Siebeck, 2004), pp. 225–56.
26. Therese Heyne to Luise Mejer, 4 November 1782, in Therese Huber, *Briefe*, ed. Magdalena Heuser, 5 vols. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1999–2005), vol. I, p. 49.
27. Therese Heyne to Karl August Böttiger, 10 January 1816, in *Briefe*, vol. IV, p. 94.

28. See Claudia Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter: Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib 1750–1850* (Munich: dtv, 1996; 1st edn 1991).
29. See Leopold von Schläzer, *Dorothea von Schläzer: Ein deutsches Frauenleben um die Jahrhundertwende 1770–1825* (Göttingen: Deuerlichsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1937), pp. 107–09, here p. 108; Dorothea Schläzer was the first woman to have a doctoral dissertation accepted by the Faculty of Philosophy at a German university.
30. See the *Erinnerungen von Luise Wiedemann geb. Michaelis, der Schwester Carolinens*, ed. Julius Steinberger (Göttingen: n.p., 1929), p. 8.
31. Therese Huber to Christian Gottlob Heyne (23–8 August 1810), in Huber, *Briefe*, vol. IV, p. 194.
32. See Becker-Cantarino, *Schriftstellerinnen der Romantik*, p. 19.
33. Friedrich Creuzer to Karoline von Günderrode, 18 May 1806, in Karoline von Günderrode, *Sämtliche Werke und ausgewählte Studien*, ed. Walter Morgenthaler, 3 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 2006; 1st edn 1990–1) vol. III, p. 247.
34. Friedrich Schlegel to August Wilhelm Schlegel, 21 August 1793, in *KFSA* III/23, p. 121.

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