



Character, Conduct and the Sexual Contract:  
Representations of Women in Works by Karl Gutzkow, Theodor Mundt,  
Fanny Lewald and Ida Hahn-Hahn.

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Dedicated to my parents  
Janos and Franciska Veber  
with love

Könnte dieses Geschlecht doch noch einmal nach einer Frucht greifen, noch einmal Zorn erregen,  
sich einmal noch entscheiden für seine Erde! Ein andres Erwachen, eine andere Scham erleben!

...

Es könnten andre Erkenntnisse sein, die einem wurden ....

Ingeborg Bachmann, "Ein Schritt nach Gomorrha."

## ***Introduction.***

### ***Part One.***

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***Conclusion.***

I use the following abbreviations:

Karl Gutzkow, *Wally, die Zweiflerin*: (W).

Theodor Mundt, *Madonna. Unterhaltungen mit einer Heiligen*. (M).

Theodor Mundt, *Charlotte Stieglitz: ein Denkmal*: (D).

Fanny Lewald, *Jenny*: (J).

Fanny Lewald, *Eine Lebensfrage*: (L).

Ida Hahn-Hahn, *Aus der Gesellschaft*: (AG).

Ida Hahn-Hahn, *Gräfin Faustine*: (GF).

## **Abstract.**

In its focus on texts by two authors of the banned Young German group of male writers and two of their female contemporaries, this thesis is a contribution to scholarship on the politics of gender and sexuality in the latter part of the volatile Pre-March period in Germany. The banning of Young Germany and their works on the grounds of alleged blasphemy, immorality, and undermining the pillars of society provides the backdrop for my comparative discussion of the representation of female sexuality and subjectivity, love, marriage, and codes of conduct in novels by these writers. I compare and contrast each writer's contestation or support of normative constructs of woman and the feminine, love and marriage. These normative constructs specified the moral nature of both the private sphere and of woman, and supported the ideological separation of the public and private spheres. They became increasingly significant as a stabilising mechanism deployed to ensure the maintenance of social morality.

On the basis of an analysis of Fichte's "Fundamentals of Family Law" through Carole Pateman's concept of the sexual contract I show that that normative constructs of the ideal woman and the ideology of the separate spheres reinforce and are reinforced by the sexual contract that determines women's (sexual) subordination to men through the judicial mechanism of marriage. My assessment of the individual literary texts discusses their challenge to the norms established and supported by these three conceptual frameworks.

My analysis of Fichte's "Family Law" demonstrates that this contract has an impact not only on the socially sanctioned form of heterosexual relationship, but also on the socially sanctioned form of subjectivity and sexuality of women in particular. When placed alongside literary fictions of female development, the 'character' and 'plot' devised for the ideal woman and her life by Fichte's "Family Law" allows evaluation of the extent to which a literary

fiction troubles or subverts normative expectations of womanhood and the social and sexual performances required of women.

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

Maria Veber

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