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Remembering Two Mad Women: Female Madness and Society in Adalbert Stifter's *Turmalin* and Wilhelm Raabe's *Im Siegeskranze*

Introduction

Throughout the nineteenth century, madness was a widespread theme in European art and literature. Many works of the Romantic era for instance, such as Tieck's *Der blonde Eckbert* or Hoffmann's *Nachtstücke*, represent madness as a character's reaction to fantastic and inexplicable phenomena that suddenly become manifest in their world.[1] While these examples mostly focus on male characters, depictions of insane female characters became increasingly popular over the course of the nineteenth century. Especially common was the image of a woman whose negative experiences, often abandonment by an unfaithful lover, lead to her descent into madness. It is striking that, in a female character, madness was rarely seen as a symptom of artistic genius as in the case of (male) poets such as Torquato Tasso (as in Goethe's play) or Jakob Lenz (in Büchner's novella). Instead, insanity in women became increasingly to be considered a pathologic deviation from social norms as well as a typically female affliction, caused by women's 'fragile minds'. Helen Small calls this phenomenon the "feminization of madness".[2] As such, madness was not only an individual illness but a socially constructed concept determined by oppressive gender notions. In this essay, I compare two nineteenth-century novellas featuring mad women, *Turmalin* by Adalbert Stifter (1853) and *Im Siegeskranze* by Wilhelm Raabe (1866). I demonstrate that both move away from the Romantic tradition of subjectively depicting an individual's mind and focus instead on the social dimension of madness and its implications.

In *Madness and Civilisation*, Michel Foucault underscores the constructed nature of the concept of madness. He argues that insanity is not a fixed medical condition but rather a form of deviation from a given society's definition of the norm. Over centuries, individuals failing to comply with that norm often faced oppression and exclusion.[3] Following Foucault, Veronika Schuchter argues:

> Der Wahnsinn ist untrennbar verbunden mit der Unterdrückung von Gruppen und Individuen, den Wahnsinnigen wird jedes Recht auf Selbstbestimmung

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1 Cf. André Vieregge: Nachtseiten. Die Literatur der Schwarzen Romantik. Frankfurt a. M. et al.: Peter Lang, 2008, p. 264-66.

2 Helen Small: Introduction. In: Love's Madness. Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity, 1800-1865. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p. v-x , here p. vii.

3 Cf. Michel Foucault: Madness and Civilisation. A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason. New York: Pantheon, 1965, p. 117f.

> genommen, sie werden aus der Gesellschaft entfernt, entwertet und unglaubwürdig gemacht.[4]

Seen as a means of oppression, madness becomes less of a medical and more of a social or cultural phenomenon. The verdict of insanity is tantamount to an act of incapacitation in the legal sense; the mad person loses their status as a full member of the community and is instead reduced to a problematic accumulation of symptoms that needs to be monitored and, if not cured, kept under lock and key. As scholars such as Elaine Showalter and Annette Schlichter have demonstrated, madness increasingly became associated with femininity from 1800 onwards; the latter speaks of an "Analogisierung von Weiblichkeit und Wahnsinn"[5] which took place during that period. Correspondingly, literary depictions of mad female characters in the nineteenth century reflected (and sometimes challenged) this mechanism of exclusion and oppression. In their seminal work *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that, over centuries, it was the depiction of female characters by male authors that fixed the image of women being either saintly or promiscuous, angels or monsters. Beyond the two poles of this dichotomy, depictions of average women were comparatively rare. The two authors conclude:

> [P]recisely because a woman is denied […] autonomy […], she is not only excluded from culture […] but she also becomes herself an embodiment of just those extremes of mysterious and intransigent Otherness which culture confronts with worship or fear, love or loathing.[6]

From this alleged intrinsic otherness of the female it was only a small step to the proclamation of insanity as a common hallmark of women in general,[7] and as such it was also frequently depicted in literature. Many literary texts (as well as other forms of art, especially operas) in the second half of the nineteenth century feature female heroines who lose their minds.[8] Seen from a feminist perspective, the verdict of madness provided yet another instrument to subdue women's active participation in public life.

In this essay I argue that Stifter's narrative is more compliant with the traditional view of mad women as described above, with his character first appearing as an

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4 Cf. Veronika Schuchter: Wahnsinn und Weiblichkeit. Motive in der Literatur von William Shakespeare bis Helmut Krausser. Marburg: Tectum, 2009, p. 10.

5 Annette Schlichter: Die Figur der verrückten Frau. Weiblicher Wahnsinn als Kategorie der feministischen Repräsentationskritik. Tübingen: Ed. Diskord, 2000, p.14.

6 Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar: The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984, p. 19.

7 Small points out that madness was perceived as a "quintessentially feminine" condition. Cf. Small: Love's Madness, p. 10.

8 Cf. Small: Love's Madness, p. 11.

untamed monster and then gradually being turned into a sort of domestic 'angel'. Raabe, on the other hand, tells the story of a heroic, almost allegorical woman reduced to a raging lunatic whose demise is caused by the failure of her social surroundings to support her political cause during the Napoleonic occupation of 1813. Stifter uses madness as a cipher of the Other, as something alien and yet inherent to bourgeois society. Raabe, meanwhile, resorts to the well-established theme of a woman maddened by the loss of her lover but transcends it by adding the political dimension. I also show how both authors make use of the motif of remembering and forgetting in telling their respective stories.

Adalbert Stifter: *Turmalin*

Stifter's novella *Turmalin* was first published in 1853 as part of his short prose collection *Bunte Steine.*[9] The story begins with the minute description of a bourgeois household in Vienna. Its owner, the "Rentherr" – whose name the readers never learn – leads a quiet private life with his wife and their baby daughter. After having had a love affair, the woman disappears, and shortly afterwards the Rentherr also leaves, taking his daughter with him. The second part of the novella is related by a female friend of the narrator. She describes how she encounters a man and his daughter living in a dark, subterranean room in a derelict house. The girl, characterised by an enormous head, limited speech, and erratic behaviour, is left alone after her father's sudden death. The first-person narrator looks after the girl and, with much effort, manages to smooth out her oddities, gradually preparing her for a normal life in society. It later turns out that her father was the Rentherr whose life collapsed after his wife left him. The novella ends abruptly with the omniscient narrator taking over again, stating that no-one now remembers this story.

The mad girl makes her first appearance as an uncanny creature living in a dark cellar and frightening the narrator's small son: "Da sah bei den Erdfenstern des Perron'schen Hauses ein fürchterlich großes Angesicht heraus, und schrie: 'Laß, laß!' Ich blickte nach dem Kopfe hin, er hatte starre Augen, war sehr blaß, und war erschreckend groß." (T, p. 140) The girl's madness becomes apparent not only in her behaviour, which shows she is not familiar with the bourgeois code of conduct, but also in her body. Her head is abnormally large, and her eyes have a transfixed stare, the latter considered a typical symptom of insanity. The mental illness has inscribed itself into her physical appearance, making it visible for everyone, and therefore causing the need to hide her away in a secluded space. This space, a cellar in a derelict house, at the same time provides a suitably sinister backdrop to her dark persona. She is literally being shoved beneath the surface in an attempt to hide away reminders of a traumatic experience, namely her mother's unfaithfulness. For the narrator and her son as representations of bourgeois society not yet privy to the

[9] Adalbert Stifter: Turmalin. In: Bunte Steine und Erzählungen. Düsseldorf: Artemis und Winkler, 2006, p. 117-59, here p. 140 (subsequently cited in the text as T). An earlier version, with significant differences in the plot, was published in 1848 with the title "Der Pförtner im Herrenhaus".

girl's personal story, she appears as a mysterious and scary impersonation of the 'Other' clearly not belonging to the orderly bourgeois world they inhabit. It later turns out that she lives in appalling conditions with her father who compels her to imagine and describe her parents' doleful fate in a way that practically amounts to what we today would call child abuse:

> Er sperrte immer zu, wenn er fort ging. Wenn ich fragte, was ich für eine Aufgabe habe, während er nicht da sei, antwortete er: 'Beschreibe den Augenblick, wenn ich tot auf der Bahre liegen werde, und wenn sie mich begraben'; und wenn ich dann sagte: 'Vater, das habe ich ja schon oft beschrieben', antwortete er: 'So beschreibe, wie deine Mutter von ihrem Herzen gepeinigt in der Welt herumirrt […] und wie sie in der Verzweiflung ihrem Leben ein Ende macht.' Wenn ich dann sagte: 'Vater, das habe ich auch schon oft beschrieben', antwortete er: 'So beschreibe es noch einmal.' (T, p. 152)

It is probably the father who, by keeping the girl in confinement, triggered or at least exacerbated her mental condition. As a result, she becomes a mere extension of his symptoms with barely a life of her own and needs help in order to break free from her sinister existence after his death. Even then, however, she is not allowed to develop according to her own designs. As a ward of the narrator, she has to fulfil the expectations of bourgeois society towards a young girl, not least by contributing to household finances as a seamstress.[10] Through this act of domestication, the girl is accepted back into the community, albeit on an underprivileged social level. Reintegration into society also brings about a healing process, so that her madness gradually recedes but, unlike Ludowike in Raabe's novella, she is not released into freedom (albeit only for a very short time) but into a society determined by bourgeois constraints.

It is obvious that Stifter depicts his female characters according to the traditional dichotomy of 'Heilige' and 'Hure': The Rentherr's wife, as a classical 'femme fatale', triggers the disintegration of her family through her adultery. Her virtuous counterpart, the Virgin Mary, is present on a painting in the room containing her bed and her daughter's cradle. Apart from her failure to emulate the "Heilige Mutter" (T, p. 122), the readers learn little else about the Rentherr's wife. In contrast to her, the first-person narrator is the very image of an idealised spouse, mother, and housewife. She displays all the character traits associated with a 'good woman', i.e., charity, piousness, well-developed domestic abilities, and obedience towards her husband whose approval she seeks after having met the girl (T, p. 148). Correspondingly, the girl is encouraged to acquire traditionally female skills in order to support herself and to leave behind her disorderly past. Her former lack of these abilities is, in fact, considered one of her symptoms: "[Das Mädchen hatte keine] Vorstellung […] von der geringsten weiblichen Arbeit. Nicht einmal von dem Waschen und Reinigen eines Lappens, von dem Zusammennähen zweier Flecke

[10] Cf. Stifter: Turmalin, p. 157.

hatte es einen Begriff." (T, p. 152) Her ignorance in the female domain of needlework needs to be countered in order to turn her into a 'normal' woman. After having been instructed in this particular field, the girl becomes less of an outsider. Even her abnormally large head gradually gets smaller after a treatment in a health resort, indicating the reinstatement of her sanity. Just as her insanity had been physically visible before, her return to normalcy also becomes apparent in a bodily change. As a reformed being in all respects, her reintegration into society eventually becomes possible.

In the world of *Turmalin*, normality is clearly defined by bourgeois standards. Given the almost animal-like existence of the girl in her cellar, one could even deduce that only respected members of society can be fully human. Stifter presents here an intricate intertwining of social and psychological imagery of madness. On the one hand, the girl's insanity reflects her father's traumatic experience. In this sense, her symptoms are part of a psychological mechanism, as a personal reaction to an external catastrophe. On the other, the fall from bourgeois grace triggered by her mother's behaviour with the ensuing descent into poverty and the nightmarish confinement in the cellar all seem to equate insanity with a life outside bourgeois society, as if the two were identical and dire poverty a mere symptom.

The Rentherr's attempt to hide away his daughter as a symbol and reminder of his social degradation is an act of enforced forgetting, while the first-person narrator represents the opposite in her efforts to unearth the whole story. In this fashion, the plot of *Turmalin* weaves around forgetting and remembering, creating a sinister and compelling image of mental processes. In the end, however, forgetting prevails. The fact that none of the main characters in *Turmalin* has a name already indicates that the story is constantly under the threat of being forgotten, and indeed, the novella ends with oblivion taking over. The city itself, as it were, submerges the story of the family:

> […] die Frau wohnt schon lange nicht mehr in der Vorstadt, das Perronsche Haus besteht nicht mehr, eine glänzende Häuserreihe steht jetzt an dessen und der nachbarlichen Häuser Stelle, und das junge Geschlecht weiß nicht, was dort gestanden war, und was sich dort zugetragen hatte. (T, p. 158)

This rather abrupt and unexpected ending practically erases the whole preceding story. Despite the first-person narrator's attempts to bring the girl and her story, literally and figuratively, into the light, both she and her ward fall back into oblivion without any explanation given. Correspondingly, in their interpretation of *Turmalin*, Martin and Erika Swales argue that the story "exposes us to the experience of the inexplicable".[11] The circumstances of the girl's background are never fully spelled out; her story is pieced together bit by bit in a kind of detective work carried out by the narrator, with many details left unexplained. The almost Kafkaesque lack of any

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[11] Martin and Erika Swales: Adalbert Stifter. A Critical Study. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 142.

information about both the past and the future of the rescued girl demonstrates the modernity of Stifter's writing, and at the same time calls into question Christian Begemann's assertion that the worlds created by Stifter were, as a rule, essentially readable and had a clearly decipherable semiotic structure.[12] *Turmalin* leaves the readers with a dark ending denying any further insights that would shed more light on the story.

In some respects, *Turmalin* constitutes a remarkable exception in Stifter's work. As a rule, the fear of terrible and incomprehensible forces threatening human lives are only present as vague undercurrents in his novels and stories, often in the guise of natural disasters, especially snow- or thunderstorms. As Begemann points out, "[das] Entropische und Amorphe ist in Stifters Werk über den Schneefall in *Bergkristall* bis zur späten Schilderung *Aus dem Bairischen Walde* Gegenstand des größten Schreckens."[13] In these examples, the threat to human life and happiness is external, located in the forces of nature, and is therefore, by definition, both alien to, and beyond the control of, human beings. In *Turmalin*, however, these destructive forces are openly at work much closer to home in the human mind, and they are just as incomprehensible and illegible as the blizzards and gales of Stifter's other works. Following Begemann's argument, one could interpret the girl's insanity as a form of human entropy (as reflected in the English term 'disorder'), and her pathologically large head as amorph. This is of course a rather cruel way of interpreting the image of human suffering represented by the girl, and at best constitutes yet another objectivisation of her character, but it is in line with Stifter's writing in general. The first introduction of the girl, in which she appears like something out of a horror story, presents her as an unknown being belonging to an unknown world. At this point in the narrative, neither the girl's gender nor even her humanity are acknowledged as she appears to be merely a disembodied, talking head. The initial shock of her discovery is overcome by the first-person narrator's charitable efforts but the girl nonetheless serves as a reminder of an uncontrollable and dark world just beneath the surface of everyday life. Correspondingly, the novella opens with the ominous analogy: "Der Turmalin ist dunkel, und was da erzählt wird, ist sehr dunkel." (T, p. 119)

Wolfgang Matz argues that Stifter's notorious trademark of describing interiors and landscapes in agonising detail is an attempt to keep at bay the disintegrating forces of disorder, in nature as well as in human beings.[14] Inanimate objects seem to provide a reassuring stability that people so often lack. *Turmalin* also begins in this fashion. Over the first four pages, the reader learns a lot about the Rentherr's house before his family is finally introduced. Swales points out that the baby girl is in fact just another precious object in her father's collection:[15] "Unter diesem Zelte stand

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[12] Christian Begemann: Die Welt der Zeichen. Stifter-Lektüren. Stuttgart/Weimar: Metzler, 1995, p. 25.

[13] Begemann: Welt der Zeichen, p. 20.

[14] Wolfgang Matz: Gewalt des Gewordenen. Zu Adalbert Stifter. Graz/Wien: Droschl, 2005, p. 19.

[15] Swales: Adalbert Stifter, p. 150.

auf einem Tische ein feiner Korb, in dem Korbe war ein weißes Bettchen, und in dem Bettchen war das Kind […], bei dem sie öfter standen und die winzigen roten Lippen und die rosigen Wangen und die geschlossenen Äuglein betrachteten." (T, p. 122) This description, calling to mind a Russian Matryoshka doll, sounds like something out of a fairy tale but otherwise, *Turmalin* bears little resemblance to a magic world where all is well. The Rentherr, so bent on conserving everything, loses all. After the disintegration of the family, none of his numerous material possessions, be it furniture, books, paintings, or other works of art, remain to hold up the bourgeois superstructure that stood between the characters and oblivion. The Rentherr had a close relationship with the 'Dinge' Stifter is so obsessed with,[16] but not with his own family. In a contorted version of the bourgeois tradition of handing down heirlooms, he lets his daughter inherit nothing but his trauma so that his own insanity, which is barely touched upon in the plot, becomes apparent in her. Even before the onset of catastrophe, there were hints that the Rentherr himself was not as flawless a bourgeois citizen as it would first appear. Although his household is defined by bourgeois values, his collection of 'famous men' and most notably the complicated apparatus provided for the contemplation of the paintings already indicate a certain inclination to quirky originality and therefore a mild subversion of the bourgeois order.[17] In his daughter, this latent deviation later becomes manifest.

The mad girl in Stifter's *Turmalin* is objectified by all and everything. She bears the dire consequences of her father's sad family history, becoming insane as if by proxy. She is then made into an ambitious project for the first-person narrator in her endeavour to return her to sanity. In addition, she experiences a double exclusion, due to her madness on the one hand, and due to her extreme poverty on the other. These two mechanisms of exclusion are so closely interlaced that it is difficult to tell them apart. They both appear simultaneously as each other's cause and symptom. In *Turmalin*, Stifter presents mental disorder as a consequence of social disorder. The first-person narrator briefly succeeds in re-establishing order but in the end her efforts turn out to be in vain. The girl and her story, although saved from the darkness of the cellar for a brief time, slip back into the darkness of oblivion.

Wilhelm Raabe: *Im Siegeskranze*

Raabe's novella *Im Siegeskranze*[18] was first published in 1866. The plot is set in the same year. An old woman tells her granddaughter the story of her sister Ludowike who descended into madness after her fiancé was shot by the French authorities during the occupation of Germany in 1813. Ludowike had shared her fiancé's

[16] These inevitably recurring 'Dinge' famously caused Arno Schmidt to roll his eyes at Stifter in his pamphlet "Der sanfte Unmensch: unverbindliche Betrachtungen eines Überflüssigen". Berlin: Ullstein, p.120.

[17] Cf. Stifter: Turmalin, p. 120.

[18] Wilhelm Raabe: Im Siegeskranze. In: Raabe: Sämtliche Werke. Ed. By Karl Hoppe/Jost Schillemeit. Vol. 9/2, Braunschweig: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1963, p. 211-52 (subsequently cited in the text as S).

political convictions and encouraged his activism. She becomes mad at the very moment when the news of his execution reaches her and is forthwith excluded from social life in the community, with only her little sister, the narrator, as company. She is locked into a windowless cellar while the Wars of Liberation sweep across Germany, and the French are finally beaten. During the celebrations of Ascension Day the following year, the narrator frees her sister, but Ludowike, who regains consciousness for only a brief time, dies in the garden, surrounded by the blossoms of spring.

The narrator presents Ludowike's descent into madness after the death of her fiancé as, if not altogether inevitable, at least not surprising, and the diagnosis itself is never contested. Raabe thus paints an established and fairly common picture of female insanity in his narrative:

> Tales of women driven to insanity and, in many cases, to suicide after the death or treachery of their lovers were more than just a free-standing literary convention. They were deeply ingrained in the culture's conception of femininity, as they had been for centuries.[19]

The family's response to the outbreak of illness corresponds with the pattern of oppression and exclusion as described by Foucault. Therefore, at first glance, *Im Siegeskranze* appears to be just another story of a woman driven mad by the loss of her lover. However, Raabe goes beyond the merely private grief of the deserted lover by presenting the political dimension as crucial in causing Ludowike's illness. Against the historical background of Germany's occupation by French troops, Ludowike and her fiancé represent the nationalistic fervour, which, according to a widespread national-liberal myth during the run-up to German unification in 1871, had allegedly swept across the whole of Germany, leading to a combined effort to overcome the invaders.[20] *Im Siegeskranze* calls this supposedly universal display of patriotic feeling into question at a time when belligerent anti-French resentment and militant German jingoism were on the rise again in the context of Bismarck's wars of unification.[21]

At the moment of her fiancé's departure, Ludowike appears as a tragic heroine with a distinctly Christian note represented by the "Fensterkreuz", underlining the

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19 Small: Love's Madness, p. 5.

20 Cf. Michael Jeismann: Das Vaterland der Feinde. Studien zum nationalen Feindbegriff und Selbstverständnis in Deutschland und Frankreich 1792 – 1918. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1992, p. 64.

21 Cf. for example Frank Becker: Bilder von Krieg und Nation. München: Beck, 2001, p. 209.

motif of self-sacrifice in an imitation of Christ's passion:[22] "'Ade, ade, mein Lieb, ich gebe dich hin, leb wohl in Ewigkeit, ich muß dich geben fürs Vaterland, – lebe wohl, lebe wohl!' Das hat die Schwester gerufen und umschlang mit beiden Armen das Fensterkreuz." (S, p. 226) Her patriotic sacrifice, however, is ignored by the rest of the community and so remains without effect. The lack of general support towards Ludowike's cause is the final straw that triggers the outbreak of her insanity, and not just the loss of her lover. Her active and conscious patriotic sacrifice results in her becoming a passive victim of the events. The German word 'Opfer' intriguingly contains both aspects of Ludowike's story. In her study *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit*, Aleida Assmann analyses the term, pointing out the

> […] Polarisierung der Begriffe 'sacrificium' und 'victima', die […] zwei gegensätzliche Pole dessen markieren, was im deutschen Wort 'Opfer' zusammenfällt: von lat. 'sacrificium' [...] wird der selbstbestimmte Einsatz des eigenen Lebens innerhalb einer religiösen oder heroischen Semantik abgeleitet; von lat. 'victima' [...] das passive und wehrlose Objekt von Gewalt.[23]

In Ludowike's character, both aspects become one. She sacrifices her fiancé out of her own volition in the belief that she can thereby serve her fatherland. Her illness, however, suddenly reduces her in a radical way to a private person incapable even of looking after herself, let alone of acting in the interest of a national collective. Forced to remain passive, she becomes an 'Opfer' in the sense of victim, excluded from the public sphere until her death. The people in her social environment obviously find the scandal of a mad family member preferable to that of a female resistance fighter. Consequently, the problem embodied by Ludowike is subdued by relocating her from the political to the domestic sphere, i.e. the place where women during the era in which the plot is set were supposed to belong. The verdict of her madness is also society's restrictive response to a politically active woman. As is the case with the girl in *Turmalin*, Ludowike is hidden from sight and held in an underground chamber. While Stifter's character is an embodiment of her father's painful personal story, Ludowike represents a shameful reminder of her community's lack of national fervour that prevented them from acting together against the common enemy, Napoleon Bonaparte. She is therefore locked away and forcefully forgotten in order to spare her family the need to confront their own cowardly behaviour: "Aber das begriff ich klar, daß man die Ludowike schier zu

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[22] With her brief 'resurrection' from the metaphorical death of her madness and subsequent redemption and 'ascension' to heaven on Ascension Day the emulation of Christ's passion becomes very clear. For a detailed analysis of Christian motifs and symbols in "Im Siegeskranze", see Heinrich Detering: Theodizee und Erzählverfahren. Narrative Experimente mit religiösen Modellen im Werk Wilhelm Raabes. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck u. Ruprecht, 1990, p. 63ff.

[23] Aleida Assmann: Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik. Munich: Beck, 2006, p. 73.

den Toten rechnete und daß ein jeder jeden Gedanken an sie so hastig als möglich aus seinem Sinne zu verscheuchen bemüht war […].” (S, p. 242) The actions of the local community call into question the allegedly all-encompassing collective rage against Napoleon often claimed by contemporaneous national-liberal historiography.[24]

Ludowike becomes both invisible and silent. Not only do her family refuse to talk or even think about Ludowike, she herself loses the power of speech, never uttering anything except groans and screams until a few moments before her death. The mental illness, as in *Turmalin*, also becomes physically visible when her body deteriorates, evoking an animal rather than the heroic allegory of the fight for Germany's freedom which her sister had seen in her before the onset of her illness. Likewise, her wild behaviour when she briefly manages to escape her prison indicates that insanity equals loss of humanity: “Sie jauchzte in ihrer Freiheit gleich einem wilden Tier, rannte im Kreis umher und warf sich zu Boden und wälzte sich.” (S, p. 240) Ludowike has become a monstrous hybrid of woman and beast, effectively embodying both female stereotypes described by Gilbert and Gubar, first the angel and later the monster. This calls to mind the girl in *Turmalin* who makes her first appearance as a frightening, monster-like creature. However, while the girl retained her speech and, with the help of the first-person narrator gradually recovers, mad Ludowike is not even considered as part of the human race anymore. Her insanity is not simply a (mental) condition but rather a descent into the animal kingdom, however Raabe does suggest that the harsh treatment she received at least exacerbates, if not altogether causes, her transformation into a beast-like monstrosity. Ludowike is being treated like an animal, and therefore acts like one. However, *Im Siegeskranze* exceeds the well-established dichotomy of angel and monster by conveying a concept of femininity that goes beyond traditional notions. The female characters of *Im Siegeskranze* are unconventional in their political commitment, as well as in their autonomy and will to resistance. After Ludowike's collapse, her sister, although only a child herself, opposes and criticises the family's response to Ludowike's condition and finally, in an act of conscious disobedience, sets her free. The narrator also never hints that Ludowike, by deviating from the female stereotype, to some extent deserved her fate but rather places the blame explicitly on the members of the local community for their failure to support her: “Ja, hätte die Stadt sich anders gerührt, hätte man die Sturmglocken geläutet gegen die Unterdrücker, so wär's ein ander Ding gewesen, und die Schwester wär sicherlich gerettet worden.” (S, p. 229) This also puts paid to the assumption that Ludowike's madness is solely down to the death of her fiancé.

Towards the end of the novella, after the war, the characters are bent on resuming their ordinary lives, covering and erasing the traces of desolation, just as the memory of Ludowike's deed had been swept under the carpet.[25] The personal

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[24] Cf for example Horst Carl: Der Mythos des Befreiungskrieges. In: Dieter Langewiesche and Georg Schmidt (eds.): Föderative Nation. Deutschlandkonzepte von der Reformation bis zum Ersten Weltkrieg. Munich: Oldenbourg, 2000, p. 63-82, here p. 65.

[25] Cf. Raabe: Im Siegeskranze, p. 238.

stories of individuals such as her are forgotten in order for the survivors to move on. This calls to mind Nietzsche's famous observation, in his second *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtung*, that the ability to forget is an indispensable condition for life.[26] In this sense, the hiding away of mad Ludowike is a precondition for her family to resume their existence the way it had been before the war. Once the French occupation as the initial reason for Ludowike's demise was over, life could theoretically continue as it had before. Her very person, however, impedes this convenient mechanism of forgetting. She constitutes an unmistakable reminder of those past events that everyone else (with the exception of her sister) would rather pass over in silence. For Ludowike, the past inexorably continues into the present, although the members of her community have moved on. However, the first-person narrator passes on her knowledge of the events to her own granddaughter, anchoring Ludowike's story firmly in the family's oral tradition. In this way, past, present, and future intertwine; memory becomes heritage. By telling Ludowike's story to her granddaughter, the first-person narrator creates an alternative version of history from a female perspective. Not the 'great events' of history, as recorded by male historiography, are at the core of this account of the Napoleonic Wars but the experience of female suffering.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have shown how Stifter and Raabe take on and adapt the theme of female madness in the second half of the nineteenth century. In both novellas, the main story is set within a frame narrative and features a female first-person narrator telling the story of a mad woman. In accordance with Small's theory,[27] the insane person in both cases does not speak for herself but is instead spoken about. At the same time, both authors chose a female narrator to tell the story; Stifter even shifts the perspective from an unnamed heterodiegetic narrator to a female first-person narrator. In both cases, therefore, the insane woman is denied her own voice but has a female character speak on her behalf. It is likely that the female perspective had been chosen by the respective male authors in order to create an effect of compassion and empathy in describing the events – values which were, at that time, associated with women rather than men. Both Stifter and Raabe also have the narrator take over the function of a carer for the mad person they speak about, i.e. they assume a traditionally female role in the plot. In that sense, both novellas subscribe to traditional views of gender roles. In addition, Stifter's female narrator is complicit in the patriarchal society she is part of. Raabe, on the other hand, shows his narrator as more rebellious, calling into question the (male) authority of her family. While in *Turmalin*, the girl is encouraged to emulate her rescuer's model of bourgeois femininity, Raabe's heroine is presented in a way that makes the reader sympathise with her cause as well as her ordeal. It becomes quite clear that it is not

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[26] Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche: Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1972, p. 246.

[27] Small: Love's Madness, p. ix.

necessarily Ludowike who needs to change but rather her unforgiving family and the wider community of the town. *Im Siegeskranze* therefore challenges the social mechanisms of exclusion in a more explicit way than *Turmalin* does.

Foucault states in *Mental Illness and Psychology* that "society does not wish to recognise itself in the ill individual whom it rejects or locks up".[28] And indeed, the mad character in both novellas serves as a mirror of society. In *Turmalin*, the girl's shortcomings in terms of education and social skills form an inverted image of the bourgeois ideal of the Biedermeier period. In her study of Foucault, Lois McNay underscores that "madness became implicated in this new sensibility concerning the moral worth of labour. The mad […] came to be seen […] as those who fail to assimilate into the bourgeois order and its ethic of work."[29] And indeed, the Rentherr did not do any work but attended to his diverse artistic aspirations instead. As such, he was already a potentially problematic character. His daughter, likewise, is at first unable to contribute to society through any kind of labour. She has to learn a trade in order for her sanity to be reinstated and for her to become an acceptable member of society. In *Im Siegeskranze*, meanwhile, the mirror image works the other way round: Ludowike first appears as an idealised patriotic icon and later as the very embodiment of the community's bad conscience. In both instances, the people around her are unwilling to acknowledge her and the notion of guilt she symbolises. Rather than trying to reintegrate her as Stifter's narrator does, they are bent on hiding her away. As a consequence, she becomes something like a living skeleton in the closet.

While Raabe's female characters are in a justified revolt against the oppressive mechanisms of society they encounter, Stifter is more inclined to subscribe to the traditional definition of insanity as a deviation from the norm that can and should be corrected. Whereas, in Raabe's novella, Ludowike's confinement constitutes a response to her condition, in *Turmalin* cause and consequence are reversed: The girl's exclusion from society triggered her symptoms which are, therefore, reversible once 'orderly' circumstances are re-established. Accordingly, the notion of mental health conveyed here is a construction identical with the social norm, as if madness could only exist outside society. It is, however, necessary to point out that Stifter does not present reintegration into society as a universal solution. The novella does not have a happy ending, as for example a positive image of the girl getting on with her life; instead, the disintegrating force of forgetting prevails after all. This is in contrast to many of Stifter's other works, *Bergkristall* for example, which is also a narrative about crisis but ends with complete redemption.

Raabe, on the other hand, although taking over the Foucauldian pattern of exclusion and confinement, conveys outrage at the injustice of these measures through the voice of the first-person narrator. By choosing a female perspective in solidarity with Ludowike, Raabe offers a counter-narrative to the predominantly male power discourse in society, casting a critical light on patriarchal responses to

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[28] Michel Foucault: Mental Illness and Psychology. New York: Harper and Row, 1976, p. 63.

[29] Lois McNay: Foucault. A Critical Introduction. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994, p. 20.

madness. Ludowike is not merely another example of a raging lunatic like Mr Rochester's first wife but rather a victim of a hostile environment who deserves compassion and is eventually vindicated.

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