

**“Die zukünftige Ehefrau” and “alte Jungfer” in Fanny
Lewald’s First Fiction and Autobiography**

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Abstract

Celebrations two hundred years after her birth acknowledge Fanny Lewald (1811-1889), a prolific writer, as an early spokesperson for the emancipation of women from restricted social roles. Her autobiography, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, published in 1861-62 when she was 50 years old, describes the first 30 years of her life. In it, she details growing up female in a middle-class home in Königsberg and how she was prepared to assume narrowly defined roles of wife, mother, and household manager (Gattin, Mutter, Hausfrau). Marriage in late 18th and early 19th century Germany was touted by Joachim Heinrich Campe and others as the only way open to a woman to achieve her feminine purpose and perfection (weibliche Bestimmung und Vollkommenheit). Lewald's autobiography can be read as a novel of development describing how she waited in vain for an acceptable marriage proposal, but eventually achieved her own liberation by becoming self-supporting as a writer. This study explores the ideal of femininity as articulated by Campe, Lewald's negotiation of this ideal as described in her autobiography and how the characters in her first piece of fiction interact with the ideal. Lewald's first fictional piece, a fairy tale entitled "Modernes Märchen," was published in 1841. This tale was revised and republished as "Tante Renate" in 1862 after a twenty-year time lapse in which Lewald had become an established author and had married. Both original and revised versions are examined with regard to changes and gender issues, in particular.

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Introduction

“When you are first published at a young age,
your writing grows with you—and in public.”

Zadie Smith
Changing My Mind (2009)

In celebration of the two-hundredth birthday of the author, Fanny Lewald (1811-1889), several events took place in Germany in March and April of 2011. The gatherings, speeches and written remembrances credited Lewald with being an early advocate for women’s emancipation. For example, the Frauen Museum in Wiesbaden invited the public to view Lewald’s grave on March 24th, her birthday, and also to attend a presentation two days later entitled “It’s Fanny—Zum 200. Geburtstag von Fanny Lewald.” At the presentation, Ulrike Helmer read excerpts from some of Lewald’s central works. The invitation introduces Lewald as “eine engagierte Vorkämpferin der Frauenemanzipation.” (“Wer war Fanny Lewald”) The same term is used to describe Lewald in an invitation to an event at the Heinrich Heine Institute in Düsseldorf. (“Fanny Lewald zum 200. Geburtstag”) At this March 26 event, Gabriele Schneider, a Lewald biographer, lectured on Lewald and her Berlin salon, and Claudia Burckhardt read from Lewald’s autobiography. In Hannover on March 31, 2011, Irmgard Bogenstahl gave a lecture at the Leibniz Bibliothek referring to Lewald “als erste deutsche Berufsautorin für die Emanzipation von Frauen und Juden.” (Bogenstahl “Fanny Lewald – Roman- und Reiseschriftstellerin und Saloniére”) In an article recognizing the birthday, Richarda Ameling applies the term “Bahnbrecherin” or female path-breaker to Lewald in the April 2011 online magazine, *Aviva*. (Ameling “200. Geburtstag von Fanny Lewald”) Evelyn Thriene repeats the term “Bahnbrecherin” in a press release for *Bremen Online*. The

headline for the release is “Eine jüdisch-deutsche Intellektuelle nimmt unsere Epoche vorweg. (Thriene “Zum 200. Geburtstag von Fanny Lewald ”) Nina Heinrich uses another term, “Vorreiterin der Frauenbewegung,” in the title of a press release for the LWL-Landesmuseum in Münster. (Heinrich) A report in *Welt des Wissens, Nachrichten über Kultur, Natur und Wissenschaft* calls Lewald a “Vordenkerin” (Thriene “200. Geburtstag von Fanny Lewald am 24. März 2011”), while articles in *Kulturportal West-Ost* call her “Frauenrechtlerin” and “Großmutter einer Bewegung ... für die gesellschaftliche und gesetzliche Gleichbehandlung von Menschen.” (Wodarz-Eichner) In this sample of references to Lewald from across Germany in 2011, she receives recognition as an individual who spoke out both for women’s emancipation and Jewish emancipation beginning in the 1840s.

Most of the remarks celebrating Lewald’s birthday in 2011 address the question, “Who was Fanny Lewald?” Christina Ujma summarizes the life, work and current research on Lewald in the opening chapter of the book she edited in 2011 *Fanny Lewald (1811-1889): Studien zu einer großen europäischen Schriftstellerin und Intellektuellen*. She comments on Lewald’s uniqueness and that she was “die berühmteste deutsche Romanautorin des 19. Jahrhunderts.” (7) In brief, these summaries include information that Lewald was born as Fanny Markus in 1811 to a middle-class Jewish family in Königsberg, the eldest of 10 children. Her parents had to receive special permission to marry. At the time, only one son from a Jewish family was allowed to establish a family and remain in Königsberg, and her uncle had already used the allowance. Restrictions on Jews in Prussia varied during Lewald’s lifetime. By the time her brothers began to prepare for university educations, her father arranged for them to convert to Christianity

to give them better access to the professions of law and medicine. Fanny was seventeen when they converted, and her father arranged for her conversion two years later to enlarge her pool of potential suitors to include Christians as well as Jews. Then her father changed the family surname to the less Jewish-sounding Lewald when Fanny was twenty. Several pieces she wrote were published anonymously shortly before she turned thirty. Shortly thereafter, she moved from her family home in Königsberg to Berlin and began supporting herself by writing. Her first pieces of fiction deal with obstacles young people face in finding marriage partners. The best known of this fiction is her novel, *Jenny*, and its exploration of barriers faced by Jews in Germany in the 1830s and 40s. She published regularly from 1841, lived from her earnings even after she married in 1855 and continued publishing until shortly before her death in 1889. Her body of works is extensive and includes novels, short stories, travel literature and essays on a variety of topics. Elke Frederiksen sums up her biographical notes on Fanny Lewald in *Women Writers of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland* (1989) with this statement:

Aside from being politically and socially interested, Fanny Lewald was one of the early voices for women's rights, and many aspects of her writings on the subject remain valid to this day. (146)

Todd Kontje, in his 1998 book, *Women, the Novel, and the German Nation 1771-1871: Domestic Fiction in the Fatherland*, discusses Lewald's first novels from the 1840s as important in addressing issues contemporary to her time. He comments:

Because the middle class defined itself in terms of the domestic virtue of its women, feminists had to violate bourgeois ideology in order to assert their rights as human beings. (13)

When speaking about the act of writing, especially politically engaged writing, he points out that it was “considered outrageous on the part of women, who were after all supposed to be tending hearth and home in domestic tranquility.” (138) A main point to be drawn from such sources is that Fanny Lewald has come to be recognized for her early advocacy for women’s rights.

Karin Tebben, in her 1998 book *Beruf Schriftstellerin* names Lewald, along with a small number of her contemporaries such as Louise Aston (1814-1871), Ida von Hahn-Hahn (1805-1880), and Luise Mühlbach (1814-1873), as women who found ways to publish and even make a living as writers at a time when a woman of the middle class was expected to be dependent upon her husband for financial support. In terms of the reception of these women authors, Kontje notes: “Lewald and Hahn-Hahn were two of the most widely read German women writers of the 1840s.” (153) Shortly after Lewald’s death, the journalist Karl Frenzel included her in the company of George Eliot (1819-1880) from England and George Sand (1804-1876) from France as noted women novelists. (Frenzel 148) However, in Germany, Lewald and other writers who were her contemporaries suffered a different fate than Eliot and Sand. Whereas the writings of Eliot and Sand have been continuously in print, these women did not enter the German literary canon, and their works went out of print. As Frederiksen puts it in the preface to her book, Lewald was one of the forgotten women authors of her time, authors whose works have had to be unearthed or rediscovered. (vii) In particular, Margaret Ward notes that Lewald’s works were suppressed under National Socialism after 1937. (19) Therefore, the studies by Kontje, Frederiksen, Tebben and others from the 1990s rest on a foundation of rediscovery of out-of-print texts that began in earnest in the 1970s. Kontje

gives much credit to Renate Möhrman for reintroducing “forgotten writers to German literary history.” (138) Möhrmann includes selections from a number of such women in her 1977 and 1978 books, *Die andere Frau: Emanzipationsansätze deutscher Schriftstellerinnen im Vorfeld der Achtunvierziger-Revolution* and *Frauenemanzipation im deutschen Vormärz: Texte und Dokumente*. Möhrmann notes that the women she selected to include in *Die andere Frau* were not content to sit back and accept the status quo that limited women to a private sphere of home life, but rather they chose to carve out a literary sphere of action in support of women’s emancipation. (1-2)

Gisela Brinker-Gabler is another person influential in research on forgotten women authors that is pertinent to the study of Fanny Lewald. In a 1976 article entitled “Die Schriftstellerin in der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft: Aspekte ihrer Rezeption von 1835 bis 1910,” Brinker-Gabler brings out the fact that women’s participation in literary production increased rapidly in the period she studied. (15-16). Women authors such as Lewald were able to earn money from their writing and their texts were read, but they were often ignored or received less notice than men in literary histories of their time. (16) In their time, the notice they received was not always positive. Brinker-Gabler indicates some negative reception of Lewald’s stand for women’s emancipation and against sociopolitical inequality. (24). Brinker-Gabler took an important step to bring Fanny Lewald back to the attention of modern audiences. She published a significant portion of Lewald’s out-of-print autobiography in 1980. This autobiography has since received much attention from a variety of scholars and has often been quoted to illustrate Lewald’s role as a “Vorkämpferin der Frauenemanzipation.”

Lewald originally published her multi-volume autobiography with an overall title of *Meine Lebensgeschichte* in 1861-62 and later revised it in the 1870s for inclusion in her collected works. The titles she chose for the individual parts and the years covered in each are as follows:

Erster Band: Im Vaterhause (1811-1832)

Zweiter Band: Leidensjahre (1832-1841)

Dritter Band: Befreiung und Wanderleben (1841-1845)

The autobiography, not written until Lewald was in her fifties, covers the first 34 years of Lewald's life more or less chronologically from her birth in Königsberg in 1811 until she was able to establish an independent life as a single woman in Berlin. The autobiography ends with Lewald's first travel abroad experience when she visited Italy.

Until Brinker-Gabler reduced the text of the 1861-62 version of the autobiography to a highly edited single volume and published it as *Fanny Lewald: Meine Lebensgeschichte* in 1980, someone wishing to read the autobiography had to seek out a copy printed in Lewald's lifetime. Thus the 1980 edition made some of the original more accessible to modern readers. Brinker-Gabler notes in her introduction to the volume:

Es ist eine Geschichte, die deutlich macht, welche Kraft es kostet, sich aus erstarrten, sinnlosen Konventionen zu befreien. Darin liegt ein aktueller Bezug dieser Autobiographie, die zu den wichtigsten Dokumenten über die Lebensverhältnisse bürgerlicher Frauen im neunzehnten Jahrhundert zählt. (*Fanny Lewald* 13)

The Brinker-Gabler edition, no longer in print, contains only about fifty percent of the entire autobiography, but what is there reveals Lewald's account of experiences in coping with gender stereotypes and family pressures during the first 30 years of her life.

Ulrike Helmer remedied the lack of a complete modern edition of Lewald's autobiography when she published Lewald's autobiography as *Meine Lebensgeschichte* in three separate volumes in 1988 and 1989. There have been subsequent reprints after the first printing. Helmer retains Lewald's titles for the individual volumes: *Im Vaterhause*, *Leidensjahre* and *Befreiung und Wanderleben*. Helmer's edition is based on the original autobiography from 1861/62. The 1871/2 version of the autobiography from Lewald's collected works is the basis of a translation into English by Hanna Ballin Lewis. Lewis selected and translated somewhat less than 50% of the autobiography and titled it *The Education of Fanny Lewald: An Autobiography* (1992). Access to the complete autobiography has subsequently been enhanced by availability online. For example, an electronic version of the autobiography from 1871/72 is available at zeno.org.

The autobiography has come to be recognized as a treasure trove of information and as unique among women's autobiographical writings from Lewald's era in its detail and completeness. Helmer singles out the comprehensiveness of *Meine Lebensgeschichte* as noteworthy in her epilog to the 1988 edition of *Im Vaterhause*:

So stellen Fanny Lewalds Werke wertvolle Zeitbilder des aufstrebenden
Besitzbürgertums, des Frauenlebens und bürgerlicher Mädchenerziehung im 19.
Jahrhundert dar, denen kulturhistorische Bedeutung zukommt.

Innerhalb des Gesamtwerkes nimmt Fanny Lewalds umfangreiche Autobiographie „Meine Lebensgeschichte“ einen besonderen Stellenwert ein: als einzigartige authentische Dokumentation bringt sie ein Frauenleben des vergangenen Jahrhunderts in all seiner Zerrissenheit zwischen Aufbruch und Anpassung nahe. (271)

Among Lewald's many works of fiction, her second novel entitled *Jenny* may be the most well known to modern audiences. In 1988, Helmer brought out a modern edition of *Jenny*, first published by Lewald in 1843. This novel features a sister and brother from a wealthy Jewish family and the conflicts they experience when they each fall in love with Christians. The novel advocates both Jewish emancipation and women's rights.

During the last two and a half decades, modern reprints, translations into English and digitization have made much of Lewald's large body of fiction and non-fiction available to scholars and the reading public. Excerpts from Lewald's work also appear in collections of selections such as the 1993 book edited by Gisela Henckmann, *Werde, die du bist! Zwischen Anpassung und Selbstbestimmung: Texte deutschsprachiger Schriftstellerinnen des 19. Jahrhunderts*. This increased accessibility has been an impetus for a number of recent articles and books on Lewald life and work. For example, Roswitha Hoffmann examines Lewald's schooling and self-education after she left school at thirteen in *Das Mädchen mit dem Jungenkopf*. (2011) Lewald's private correspondence with her future husband, Adolf Stahr, consists of nearly 900 letters. Gabriele Schneider and Renate Sternagel are in the process of publishing a three volume compilation entitled *Ein Leben auf dem Papier: Fanny Lewald und Adolf Stahr: Der Briefwechsel 1846 bis 1852*. The first volume covering the years 1846/47 appeared in 2014. Since *Meine*

Lebensgeschichte ends in 1845 when Lewald was 34, these letters reveal details of how her relationship developed with Stahr, a married man with five children, whom she met in Italy. In 1865, she wrote an account of the winter of 1845/6 called *Das Buch Adolf* as a gift for her husband, but it only appeared in serial form nine years after she passed away. Edited much later by Heinrich Spiero, he published it at *Römisches Tagebuch* in 1927. After Lewald returned from Italy, she continued to establish herself as a writer and salonière in Berlin. She lived as a self-supporting single woman there and somehow avoided overly negative reaction to what was a transgressive relationship with Stahr until 1855 when he divorced, and the couple married.

It is not difficult to find evidence within Lewald's autobiography of her advocacy for women's emancipation. For example, in this quote from *Leidensjahre*, she demands that women be allowed to do serious work both inside and outside the home as a means of emancipation.

Es ist, um gar keinem Zweifel über meine Forderung Raum zu lassen, es ist die Emanzipation der Frau, die ich für uns begehre; - jene Emanzipation, die ich für mich selbst erstrebt und errungen habe, die Emanzipation zur Arbeit, zu ernster Arbeit. (*Leidensjahre*, 69)

As Christine Umja points out, Lewald writes about herself as an example of one who found freedom or "Befreiung" from narrow gender roles. (*Fanny Lewald* 14) The voice Lewald assumes in *Meine Lebensgeschichte* is that of a 50-year old woman and experienced writer, who has triumphed over adversity. With this perspective, Lewald recalls the details of her happy childhood and school experiences, but also reflects back on the narrowness of her life when schooling ended at age 13. Until she was about 21,

she was expected to remain at home day after day practicing piano, doing needlework and household chores while her brothers continued on with schooling and university, opportunities not open to Lewald as a girl. She remembers that her father's basic principle was

daß jede Frau sich verheiraten müsse, daß die verheiratete Frau, auch wenn ihr ein beschränktes Los und ein ihr nicht zupassender Mann zuteil geworden sei, immer noch ein beneidenswertes Schicksal neben der unverheirateten habe, weil sie sich in dem ihr naturgemäßen Berufe bewege, und daß eine Frau, die in sich selbst gefestigt sei und neben ihrem naturgemäßen Berufe ein eignes inneres Leben habe, immer glücklich sein könne, wenn sie ihre Pflicht gegen ihren Mann erfülle, und ihre Kinder gut erziehe. (*Leidensjahre* 186)

The focus of her upbringing was to prepare her for her future as a wife. The title of volume two of the autobiography, *Leidensjahre*, refers to Lewald's suffering as a woman who had not yet secured a husband and had a diminished future as she aged into what her father called "ein altes Mädchen" or an "old maid." (134) The autobiography presents Lewald's refusal to accept a marriage proposal from a suitor chosen by her father, but unacceptable to her, as a particular low point during the years of suffering.

Man nahm also in der Familie an, ich würde eine alte Jungfer werden, und ich selbst war davon überzeugt. Mit sechzehn Jahren in die Gesellschaft eingetreten, kam ich mir und meinen Bekannten nicht mehr jung vor. Ich hatten nun Jahre in der Gesellschaft gelebt, neun Jahre auf den Bällen getanzt, es waren ein paar Generationen junger Mädchen und Männer an mir vorübergegangen, die ich als Kinder gekannt, während ich schon für erwachsen gegolten hatte. Meine

Freundinnen hatten sich zum großen Teil verheiratet, sie waren die einen hübscher und vermögender, die anderen nur auf ihre Versorgung bedacht gewesen, ich war übrig geblieben. ...Mit fünfundzwanzig Jahren galt ich für alt und hielt ich mich für alt! (*Leidensjahre* 148)

Though her parents considered it a duty of an unmarried woman to keep herself as young looking as possible, Lewald began to dress inconspicuously, gave up dancing and resigned herself to being unfulfilled. (216) However, her growing conviction that she was likely to remain single triggered her first thoughts on finding some purpose other than marriage for her life, some means of becoming self-supporting. The rest of *Leidensjahre* and the whole of *Befreiung und Wanderleben* narrate the way in which writing for publication became Lewald's means of self-emancipation.

Lewald describes the writing and publication of "Modernes Märchen," her first published short story in 1841 as a key element in setting her on the path to independence. (*Leidensjahre* 280-281) The two main characters in this fairy tale are a young woman, Bertha, just falling in love and an experienced aunt, Renate, who saves her niece from a bad marriage. In researching through reprints and digital copies, I discovered that Lewald had revised the fairy tale and published it again with a new title of "Tante Renate" in a two-volume collection of short stories called *Bunte Bilder* (1862). Thus, there was a twenty years period after its publication until the revised tale appeared. I also found an English translation of "Modernes Märchen" in a collection of about thirty fairy tales in the volume, *The Queen's Mirror: Fairy Tales by German Women, 1780-1900*, compiled and translated by Shawn Jarvis and Jeannine Blackwell (2001). Jarvis and Blackwell based their translation on the original 1841 version of Lewald's fairy tale published in the

periodical, *Europa*, rather than on the 1862 version in *Bunte Bilder*. Since there are differences other than the titles between “Modernes Märchen” and “Tante Renate,” I decided to examine the two versions more closely beginning with Lewald’s references to the origins of the fairy tale in *Leidensjahre*. As I looked for what others have said about it, I determined that this fairy tale has received much less attention than, for example, Lewald’s more well-known novel, *Jenny*. Therefore, I compare the original version and revised version with a focus on the two female characters and their navigation of the limited roles considered suitable for women at the time. Lewald’s autobiography serves as source material for her description of writing “Modernes Märchen” in 1841. In my comparison and analysis, I also take into account that Lewald revised the fairy tale some twenty years after she originally wrote it and that these revisions took place in approximately when she wrote her autobiography.

The remarks on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Lewald’s birth laud her. However, when evaluating Lewald’s stance on women’s emancipation across her large body of work, some commentators have also found what they consider contradictions and inconsistencies. As early as 1977, Möhrmann pointed out with some disappointment that she found only two statements supporting women’s emancipation in Lewald’s first novel, *Clementine* (1843). (*Die Andere Frau* 130) In 1986, Regula Venske enlarged upon this idea in noting that there were contradictions between the clear statements supporting women’s emancipation in Lewald’s essays compared to the behavior of some female characters in her novels. According to Venske, Lewald portrayed “some of her women characters in a degrading, dishonoring manner,” while male characters were portrayed

with manly dignity. (178) Kontje also mentions ambivalence in the main female character of Lewald's first novel, *Clementine*, but goes on to state the following:

Literary works that express contradictory impulses are often more interesting than self-confident polemics...*Clementine* performs valuable cultural labor both by articulating feminist protest and by revealing its enemies both without and within. (156)

The Lewald biographer, Margaret E. Ward, documents in *Fanny Lewald: Between Rebellion and Renunciation*

a consistent tension between Lewald's sincere desire for emancipation, which she hoped to garner for herself and others by means of a reasoned rebellion against patriarchal norms, and the constant pull of middle-class propriety... (17)

Ward acknowledges inconsistencies in Lewald's stances at different times and comments:

"Lewald's first representations of women simultaneously advocate both rebellion and renunciation." (23) In a similar vein, Christina Ujma, who edited a 2011 book entitled *Fanny Lewald (1811-1889)*, notes contradictions across the spectrum of Lewald's works throughout her long career when she states:

Ihr Engagement für die fortschrittliche Sache ließ mit den Jahren nach, weist diverse Widersprüche auf und ist gelegentlich auch eher halbherzig. (32)

The implication that there was a change across time in Lewald's writings with regard to women's emancipation further reinforces the idea that an examination of "Modernes Märchen" and its subsequent revision after twenty years might add to a better understanding of Lewald as an author.

Chapter 1: Review of the Literature

In 1986, Ute Frevert published a critical study of the lives of German women and the issue of equality between men and women entitled *Frauen-Geschichte zwischen Bürgerlicher Verbesserung und Neuer Weiblichkeit*. The study was translated into English with the title, *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation*. (1989) In the translation, Frevert noted, “Ever since 1792, at the very latest, ideas about the emancipation of women and equality between men and women have provided food for public thought in Germany.” (2) She cited Joachim Heinrich Campe (1746-1818) as one of the authoritative voices that laid out roles that were considered suitable for women in the late 18th and early 19th centuries:

In their triple role as wives, mothers and housekeepers women were the generators and guarantors of family cohesion. They were expected to conduct their lives exclusively within their own four walls and to concentrate on their married lives, organizing the household and bringing up the children... What was new, however, was the emphasis on the emotional support that women, as wives and mothers, were expected to give their husbands and children. (16-17)

In particular, Frevert singled out Fanny Lewald’s mother as “the model of a virtuous bourgeois woman” according to these standards. (34)

In 1789, Joachim Heinrich Campe first published a book called *Väterlicher Rath für meine Tochter*. Nadine Schicha, in a 2013 book entitled *Lesarten des Geschlechts*, discusses the way in which *Väterlicher Rath* has gained traction in modern research on gender. Early in her book, Schicha mentions more than twenty studies dating from the

1960s that have referred to this book as being representative of advice on women's upbringing in the early 1800s and societal views on women's roles that prevailed during Lewald's lifetime. (Schicha 10) Therefore, it is appropriate to begin with a closer look at Campe and his advice to middle class parents on how to bring up and educate their daughters to be model wives. The review also examines the concept of female emancipation as emphasized by Lewald.

On a Young Woman's Purpose, "Die zukünftige Ehefrau" or Future Wife

Campe was well-known as an educator and writer of such popular pieces of children's literature as *Robinson der Jüngere* (1779) before he published *Theophron oder der erfahrene Rathgeber für die unerfahrene Jugend*, a book of advice on the education of young men in 1783. Six years later, he extended his advice to the education of young women with *Väterlicher Rath für meine Tochter: Ein Gegenstück zum Theophron. Der erwachsenen weiblichen Jugend gewidmet*. In speaking of *Theophron* and *Väterlicher Rath*, Schicha states:

Darin konkretisierte er seine Idealvorstellungen vom männlichen und weiblichen Sozialcharacter. (9)

This literature review will begin with an examination of the ideal of feminine character as described by Campe.

In *Väterlicher Rath*, Campe chooses to make it seem as though he were speaking directly to his daughter, Charlotte, who was fifteen at the time. The fatherly tone and the practical advice given seem to have appealed to the reading public to the extent that the book was reprinted repeatedly even after Campe had died in 1818. By the time a tenth

edition appeared in 1832, Campe's daughter had reached middle age and Lewald was in her twenties. (Orman 131)

The advice given in the book lays out the socially sanctioned expectation that women best fulfill their destiny or "Bestimmung" in marriage in a three-fold manner. (Schicha 11) Campe encourages women to see themselves as created to become caring companions husbands (Gattinnen), mothers who educate their children properly (Mütter), and wise managers of their households (Vorsteherinnen des inner Hauswesens). Campe describes these roles as follows:

Gattinnen, die der ganzen zweiten Hälfte des menschlichen Geschlechts, der männlichen, welche die größern Beschwerden, Sorgen und Mühseligkeiten zu tragen hat, durch zärtliche Theilnahme, Liebe, Pflege und Fürsorge das Leben versüßen sollen; Mütter, welche nicht bloß Kinder gebähren, sondern auch die ersten Keime jeder schönen menschlichen Tugend in ihnen pflegen, die ersten Knospen ihrer Seelenfähigkeiten weislich zur Entwicklung fördern sollen; Vorsteherinnen des Hauswesens, welche durch Aufmerksamkeit, Ordnung Reinlichkeit, Fleiß, Sparsamkeit, wirthschaftliche Kenntnisse und Geschicklichkeiten, den Wohlstand, die Ehre, die häusliche Ruhe und Glückseligkeit des erwerbenden Gatten sich stellen, ihm die Sorgen der Nahrung erleichtern, und sein Haus zu einer Wohnung des Friedens, der Freude und der Glückseligkeit machen sollen. (Campe 16-17)

Campe's charge to his daughter is that as a wife she should create a home filled with peace, joy and bliss in support of her husband's efforts to earn a living for the family.

There are two aspects of Campe's work that will be referenced later as the context for my interpretation of Lewald's first published piece of fiction, "Modernes Märchen." One aspect is Campe's extensive descriptions of the virtues to be cultivated in young women in preparing them to be wives, mothers and household managers. Foremost among these were the following:

- Reinigkeit des Herzens und der Gesinnungen (Campe 141)
- Wahre und aufgeklärte Frömmigkeit (144)
- Schamhaftigkeit und Keuschheit (147)
- Freundlichkeit und immer gleiche unerschöpfliche Herzensgüte (187)

According to Campe, the virtuous wife, in exercising a long list of qualities, her purity of heart, piety, modesty, chastity, humility, geniality, kindheartedness and prudence, is to make a home in which the family thrives undistracted by the world outside. The wife is expected to sacrifice her own will to the will of her husband as she fuses her will and very being with his. Campe describes this ideal of feminine character as follows:

"ein liebesvolles Hingeben ihres eigenen Willens in den Willen des Mannes, woraus denn nach und nach ein gänzlich süßes Zusammenschmelzen ihrer eigenen Wesenheit (Existenz) mit der seinigen entsteht." (140) In an earlier passage, Campe presents a woman as becoming the ivy clinging to the oak, the wife clinging to her husband as the head of the household after they marry. (23) The clinging becomes so close that the woman fuses to the man.

The second aspect has to do with the way in which Campe warns his daughter of the pitfalls associated with marriage. He points out the flattery and false attractions of courtship and notes that a woman's happiness depends upon whom she marries. He asks

his daughter to honor the advice of her parents regarding the choice of a partner. (29-32)
He claims that it is not possible for a woman to know what kind of a husband she has married until she has been married for a period of time.

[D]as Mädchen, welches heute ihre Hand einem geliebten und liebevollen Manne gibt, kann, wofern es ihn vorher nicht ganz genau kennen lernte, nur erst nach Verlauf einer gewissen Zeit mit einiger Zuverlässigkeit erfahren, ob es einen Freund oder einen Gebieter oder gar einen Tirannen an ihm haben werde. (25)

Campe paints an unpleasant picture of what a wife might have to put up with should the husband show himself after marriage to be cold (kalt), ill tempered (übellaunig), cantankerous (knurrig) and/or sullen (mürrisch). (31) By trusting and following his advice, he hopes that his daughter can temper (mildern) and sweeten (versüßen) what is unavoidable and unpleasant for her gender. (33) According to Campe, the only proper life path for a woman is to enter marriage and strive to excel in the home circle, as wife, homemaker and mother (Gattin, Hausfrau and Mutter.) He emphasized that it is up to her to earn her husband's high regard, love and gratitude with courage and determination. (40) Indeed, he even claims that the well-being of the state has its foundation in how well mothers rear their sons as future citizens and how well wives influence their husbands to do good deeds. (19-20)

He spends some time leading into the point that a wife, from her private sphere in the home, is important to the public welfare. He argues that women are the source or spring from which good flows:

Wie die Quelle, so der Bach;...
wie das Weib, so der Bürger...

wie das häusliche Leben der Menschen, so ihr öffentliches;
wie das öffentliche Staatswohlergehn. (18)

He maintains that it is simply impossible for even the most educated and mature man to accomplish what he needs accomplish without an accomplished wife. Thus a woman should consider it her duty to be the primary driving force (Triebfeder) that sets all in motion. The force of Campe's argument can be seen in his concluding summary of the point:

Noch einmahl: allgewaltiges obgleich schwaches Geschlecht, was hängt nicht alles von deinem unsichtbaren Einflusse ab, und wie viel kommt nicht darauf an, wie lauter oder wie trübe du, Urquell aller Sittlichkeit und Unsittlichkeit, alles menschlichen Wohlergehns und alles menschlichen Elendes, seist! (19)

There is continued acknowledgement in the literature that Campe's *Väterlicher Rath* was influential in setting out a model for the social roles of middle-class woman in nineteenth century Germany. There are two fairly recent books that reference Campe's advice as influential. Michaela Fuchs features Campe as one of the popular advice givers of his time in her 1997 book, *"Wie sollen wir unsere Kinder erziehen?" Bürgerliche Kindererziehung im Spiegel der populärpädagogischen Erziehungsratgeber des 19. Jahrhunderts*. In another 1997 book entitled *Väterliche Ratschläge für bürgerliche Töchter, Mädchenerziehung und Weiblichkeitsideologie bei Joachim Heinrich Campe und Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Michaela Jonach characterizes Campe's advice as a domestication program designed to help women accept the three roles prescribed for them as subordinates dependent upon their husbands. (17) Schicha, on the other hand, cautions that there is more to Campe than his legitimizing of female subordination as

interpreted by Jonach and others. (Schicha 10-11) Schicha views both *Väterlicher Rath* and the earlier *Theophron* as showing a positive regard for improving the preparation of both male and female youth to be useful in their future lives in a changing society. She observes that the catalog of duties Campe assigned to both genders is large and that that he emphasizes the interdependence of husband and wife. From Schicha's point of view, Campe is not one-sided in putting forth only feminine social roles that were limiting. Rather, she maintains that neither gender had much room for independent personal development. (13) Schicha goes on to speak of "gewinnbringende Elemente für Frauen" in Campe's ideal of the feminine. (13) Thus Schicha advocates going beyond a focus mainly on the repression and subordination of women in Campe's book, so as not to miss some aspects of women's roles that can be interpreted as having a positive side.

It is possible to find other references to Campe and the feminine ideal he puts forth with an emphasis on the positive. Heide Wunder in her book *He is the Sun, She is the Moon: Women in Early Modern Germany*, puts it this way:

[A] woman's position as mistress of a household with authority over children and domestics became that much more important. In this role they were not only of incalculable value to their husbands, but also participated in the prevailing forms of authority and in the public sphere. (81)

Campe further claims that in marriage women achieve a higher degree of freedom and independence:

Die Ehe ist ja das einzige, euch noch übrig gelassene Mittel, einen bestimmten Standort, Wirkungskreis, Schutz, Ansehn und einen höhern Grad von Freiheit und Selbständigkeit zu erhalten. (33)

He maintains that women have the means to exercise considerable influence and be all that they can possibly be given the circumstances as they operate within the protected and private sphere of the home they create and maintain. Therefore, it follows logically from Campe's advice that it is of utmost importance for women to attract a marriage proposal so that they can become wives.

On Remaining Unmarried: "Die alte Jungfer"

A woman, who is made to believe that her goal in life is to be a future wife, is in a vulnerable position while waiting for a suitable marriage proposal. In 1870 when Lewald was nearly sixty years old, she published a series of essays entitled "Für und wider die Frauen." Here is her observation on the type of vulnerability that young women had to experience:

Und wir Frauen sitzen und sitzen von unserm siebzehnten Jahre ab und warten und warten, und hoffen und harren in müßigem Brüten von einem Tage zum andern, ob denn der Mann noch nicht kommt, der uns genug liebt, um sich unserer Hilflosigkeit zu erbarmen. Und durch jeden Hausfreund, der sich verheiratet, erleiden wir eine Enttäuschung, denn er hätte uns doch wählen können; und durch jede Herzensfreundin, die sich verheiratet, erleiden wir eine Demütigung, denn sie hat besser gefallen als wir und ist uns vorgezogen worden. Und dazu die ganzen langen Tage mit der Näharbeit in der Hand, die wenig oder nichts für die Familie einbringt, ... immer darüber nachzudenken, daß man älter und mit jedem Jahre hoffnungsloser wird! (*Politische Schriften* 128)

This statement points to the pressures upon women who do not receive a marriage proposal. The quote also reveals that while waiting, women are likely to be in competition with each other and that envy may arise. Lewald had already brought up issues facing unmarried women in an essay from well before 1870. Her essay from 1843 entitled “Einige Gedanken über die Mädchenerziehung” does not dispute Campe’s idea that marriage is the natural profession for women, but rather that women should be educated for the eventuality that they may not marry, or if they marry, that they may be widowed or remain childless. She also includes the idea that education makes a better wife, which is another point of agreement with Campe. (382-384) These two essays, one from 1843 and one from 1870, indicate that Lewald acknowledged throughout her career that marriage was important to women and that not to marry was problematic.

The above referenced quote from “Für und wider die Frauen” comes from a time period examined in Catherine L. Dollard’s 2009 book, *The Surplus Woman: Unmarried in Imperial Germany, 1871-1918*. Dollard points to a much-discussed problem in Imperial Germany, a “Frauenüberschuß” or a surplus of single women unable to find husbands and, therefore, support themselves. She states: “the female surplus was ... a cultural construction that was foundational to the moderate, radical, and religious German women’s movements.” (11) Especially around 1870, the discussion of the “Frauenfrage” led to increasing public advocacy for women’s rights, including the right to education and gainful employment.

Dollard claims that the prevailing message to women was “marry, marry well, and marry young—in every way make oneself as desirable a future wife as possible” since marriage functioned as “a protective zone outside of the competition of public life.” (24)

It was a common understanding throughout the 19th century that a wife in the private sphere of family and home “secured the integrity of the family and the purity of the state” and that “[w]omen unattached challenged the social order.” (24) Dollard devotes an entire chapter to the “alte Jungfer” and the problems that arose as women became older and remained unwed. These problems included that single women might pose an economic burden or at least become a nuisance to their family. Also, women still living with parents or relatives could not be the mistress of the house and were likely to have a limited role in its domestic activities with hours of idleness. (24) Dollard further notes that single women may have felt shame or at least disappointment at being spurned. (27) Literary depictions of old maids in the late 1800s often centered on stereotypes of an older woman as “a bitter shrew”, a “simpering, foolish romantic” or “the beloved aunt.” (31) Dollard uses the term “pariah” in conjunction with the first two characterizations of an old maid, then says that there was partial redemption for the “beloved aunt” as long as she found an available family and earned a place in that home through good deeds. (34) As Dollard’s comments indicate, the importance attached to a woman marrying and the difficulties facing an unmarried woman did not abate from the time Campe set out his arguments for marriage as a woman’s destiny, but rather intensified as the nineteenth century progressed.

A commentator on women’s emancipation who published earlier than Dollard is Herrad-Ulrike Bussemer. In her 1985 social history of the women’s movement in Germany entitled *Frauenemanzipation und Bildungsbürgertum*, she gave one of her chapters the title, “Situation der unverheirateten Frauen des Bürgertums.” Bussemer makes a number of the same points as Dollard, but she begins the chapter with a

description of the secrecy with which many unmarried women engaged in needlework to supplement the family income. Fathers wanted and often insisted on such secrecy so as not to damage their reputation as providers. Mothers feared that if it were known that their unmarried daughters earned money they would not find husbands. And when parents passed on, the daughter had to find a place to live with relatives in order to have a roof over their heads. (48) Bussemer indicates that unmarried women might make places for themselves by performing a limited range of tasks in the homes of relatives. They could help with small children, tutor slightly older children and perform household tasks such as mending or washing the clothes for the families providing them with a home. There were very few positions for governesses in homes or for teachers of the youngest children in schools, and these positions were looked down upon. (49-50) There was both lack of opportunity and social disapproval facing unmarried women who tried to earn part of their upkeep.

Bussemer includes in her references the 1863 work by Lewald entitled *Osterbriefe für die Frauen* as one of the many documents addressing problems facing women at the time. This collection of 10 fictional letters deals in large part with working class women and their plight, but also speaks for equal education for girls and boys of all social classes. (*Political Schriften*) In *Osterbriefe*, Lewald continues to advocate for equal education to provide opportunity for the individual to rise to his/her highest intellectual potential. In Margaret Ward's discussion of the emancipatory content of these letters, she notes that they were published two years before Louise Otto-Peters and Auguste Schmidt organized the *Frauenbildungsverein*. (Ward 229) Thus, before German women organized in support of more educational and work opportunities, Lewald wrestled with the limited

availability and scope of education for girls and women's financial dependence upon husbands. Bussemer's study frequently quotes from Otto-Peters to make the point that beginning from about 1848, the early years of Lewald's writing career, there were concerns expressed about the social problems of widows and their children living in poverty as well of never married women dependent upon relatives for financial support. In her study, Bussemer goes on to discuss at length the German women's movement in the 1860s and 70s. What can be seen from these dates is that Lewald spoke out for women's emancipation well before the time in which women began to organize formally in order to address such issues by political means.

Breaking Out or Emancipation through Writing

A number of 19th century German women, including Lewald, can be seen as pioneers with regard to making demands for women's emancipation. Frevert names several "rebellious" women who spoke out or acted to resist what was expected of them by society.

Fanny Lewald (1811-89) and Malvida von Meysenbug (1816-1903) refused to accept the marriage plans their parents had in store for them, and set out to make their own living. Johanna Kinkel (1810-58), Louise Aston (1814-71) and Mathilda Franziska Anneke (1817-84) all divorced husbands they did not love, and entered into new relationships which both gave them emotional fulfillment and allowed them to pursue independent literary or educational activities.

Likewise Louise Otto (1819-95) ...ran a manless household together with her

sisters, and did not marry until she chose to, at the age of thirty-nine. She was widowed soon after. (Frevert 71-72)

Each of these characterizations by Frevert involves a woman who transgressed social norms either by not marrying at a young age or by not continuing in a marriage that was not working.

Though *Meine Lebensgeschichte* seems set up to tell the story of how Lewald freed herself from the role of old maid by turning to writing as a means of supporting herself, it is interesting that even by the midpoint of the autobiography, she still claims that she had no inkling that writing might provide her a way out of the confines of living at home.

Daß ich mich als Schriftstellerin versuchen, dass ich mir als Übersetzerin eine Tätigkeit, einen Broterwerb und damit die Möglichkeit freier und völliger Entwicklung schaffen könne, daran muß ich wohl nie gedacht haben, denn ich erinnere mich nicht, in jener Zeit den geringsten derartigen Versuch gewagt zu haben. (*Leidensjahre* 149)

There is a historical context to why Lewald might not have aspired to achieve emancipation as a writer until she was nearly 30 years old. Daniel Wilson in a chapter entitled “Eighteenth-Century Germany in its Historical Context” notes that “for most of the eighteenth century, gaining a livelihood only from publishing literature was impossible.” (269) The book market was fragmented and the lack of copyright laws meant that the writer might receive payment for a piece of writing when first published, but might not be paid when it was reprinted. Wilson states it bluntly: “no writer lived as a freelancer in Germany for more than a few years before the 1790s. It was especially

difficult for a woman author ... to eke out an existence.” (269) Women might write anonymously or assume a masculine name, but they did not have the same opportunity as men to support themselves through employment in governmental bureaucracies, the church, or being in the employ of a noble while they wrote. Though it was sometimes possible for authors of either gender to put together a modest living by doing translations of books from other languages such as French and English, writing was not an obvious way earning a living, especially for women, in the era prior to Lewald’s birth. (269)

Katherine Goodman makes the point in her 1986 book, *Disclosures: Women’s Autobiography in Germany between 1790 and 1914* that “Lewald merits a place in German literary history as one of the first women writers to be taken seriously.” (147) Goodman goes on to credit Lewald with being a pioneer who supported herself and helped pave the way for greater acceptance of women into the profession of writing because she had high standards and self-respect for her work. (147) Ward also explains how Lewald insisted upon fair compensation for her writing and used several different means for maximizing income from what she wrote. (264-267) One strategy was to produce a novel for serialization in a family magazine and then rework it for publication as a book.

Joeres and Burkhard use the term “breaking out” or “Ausbruch” to describe the public acts by women in German-speaking territories in the 1800s. In their book, *Out of Line/Ausgefallen: The Paradox of Marginality in the Writings of Nineteenth-Century German Women*, they indicate that women in Lewald’s era had a painful sense of not being welcome in the public world.

Their breaking-out was in part certainly related to the mere (but hardly insignificant) fact that they were women writers at a time when women were still shackled by a gender role expectation that saw their activity centered almost exclusively in the home. Thus *any* public act by a woman—such as the writing and publishing of a text—was viewed at best with surprise, at worst with anger, mockery, or contempt. (9)

Kontje also comments on the reaction to women who became writers, especially ones who spoke out on issues such as arranged marriages, divorce, religious freedom and so on:

Political activism on the part of men was suspicious enough in the reactionary climate of the Restoration, but considered outrageous on the part of women, who were after all supposed to be tending hearth and home in domestic tranquility. By publishing politically engaged novels, and by demanding what to many seemed an intolerable degree of freedom in their personal lives, these women writers gained unprecedented notoriety and provoked a sharp backlash of resentment against a new caricature, the emancipated woman. (138)

Goodman notes that Lewald wrote her autobiography after she had achieved recognition as an author and a measure of independence financed by her writing. In the autobiography, Lewald “reveals in content and form the struggles she endured and those she never resolved. (147)

Emancipatory Statements in *Meine Lebensgeschichte*

Though Lewald could be credited as a “Vorkämpferin” for women’s emancipation on the basis of her published essays beginning from as early as 1843 and continuing on into the 1870s, it is her autobiography that is often quoted for its emancipatory sentiment. Goodman presents a short summary of some of the reforms for women for which Lewald pleaded in the autobiography:

She [Lewald] hated her piano lessons and argues that this senseless tradition be abandoned. She articulates respect for the intricacies and demands of housework and the difficulty of performing it in earlier days. She notes the transferral of many tasks outside the home and suggests that communal kitchens be established to further free women from household tedium. She had not been permitted to continue in school or train for a profession and pleads repeatedly for educational reform. On the basis of unhappy marriages she has observed, she urges that women not be forced to marry. That institution would only regain its dignity when it was founded on love, not money. (153)

These mini-essays commenting on women’s need for emancipation are interspersed throughout *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, an essentially chronological sequence of Lewald’s development into a writer. The voice Lewald assumes in the autobiography shows that she has reflected much on her experiences to produce the autobiography.

Here is just one example from *Im Vaterhause* that illustrates this reflection and perspective. While describing her experience of going to school as a six-year old, Lewald segues into the idea that a girl benefits from leaving the home to attend school:

Ich habe in diesem Betrachte diejenigen Mädchen, welche zu Hause erzogen werden, immer beklagt. Die Schule bietet gerade ihnen, deren Dasein sonst ganz in der Familie verfließt, die eigentlich Vorbildung für das Leben in der Welt und unter den fremden Menschen. (*Im Vaterhause* 67)

She does not try to voice her thoughts as a six-year old, but rather gives her perspective as an adult who values the schooling she received outside the home. Based on her experiences, she states her opinion that girls are not prepared for life by education unequal to boys and acquired at home. The narrative continues with many details of her schooling from age 9 to 13 and her continued efforts to learn after her school closed. The formal schooling she received, in her opinion, is one part of what was needed to prepare her eventually to be a writer.

Lewald makes it clear in many places in her autobiography that she accepted her upbringing and its emphasis on preparing her to be a wife. In retrospect, referring to her experience of first love and courtship by Leopold Bock and the couple's aborted courtship when she was a teenager, Lewald evaluates her outlook as misguided at the time:

Meine Aussichten für das Leben waren in meiner ersten Jugend so beschränkt gewesen...Soweit menschliche Einsicht es in meinem sechzehnten Jahre vorausberechnen können, war es mir bestimmt gewesen, als eine christliche Pastorsfrau in einem stillen Dorfe des Harzes zu leben. Ich hatte mir dies als das größte Glück gedacht, es mir mit rosigen Farben ausgemalt. (*Befreiung und Wanderleben* 156)

At the time Lewald was writing her autobiography, she realized how far she had come from the teenager who gave up dancing when Leopold insisted that it was not proper for a pastor's wife to dance. (*Im Vaterhause* 203) In hindsight, she admits that she had allowed him to dominate her and had allowed her imagination to paint too rosy a picture of what it would have meant to be a wife of Jewish heritage married to a Christian pastor in a small town.

Lewald's perspective in the autobiography is of a woman who successfully broke the mold and established a career as a writer. She chooses to speak out on women's emancipation, using her own life story as an example. The entire second volume of Lewald's autobiography, *Leidensjahre*, is interspersed with numerous emancipatory essays. Not marrying Leopold when she was still very young afforded Lewald the opportunity of travel with her father to Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Weimar, and Baden-Baden. She lived with relatives in Breslau, met her cousin, Heinrich Simon, and fell in love with him. Even though her perspective had broadened through travel and she had gained a much larger circle of acquaintances by age twenty-one, she still saw herself as a future wife. At this point in the narrative, Lewald critiques the common practice of very young women marrying older, established men as follows:

Wäre es nicht so überaus ernsthaft, so könnte man die Zuversicht sehr komisch finden, mit welcher die Männer die Aufsicht ihres Hauses, die teilweise Vertretung ihrer Stellung in der Gesellschaft, die teilweise Verwaltung ihres Erwerbes, die Pflege und Erziehung ihrer Kinder und endlich ihr eigenes Glück und ihre Ehre in die Hände von jungen Personen legen, welche für all diese wichtigen, ja für diese höchsten Leistungen durch nichts befähigt sind, als etwa

durch ihren guten Willen und den meist sehr blinden Glauben verliebter Männer an den Wert des Mädchens, das ihnen wohlgefällt. (*Leidensjahre* 67)

This example is just one of many such statements on how young women of her generation were vulnerable because their education and preparation to be wives was inadequate.

The suffering referred to in the title of the second volume of *Meine Lebensgeschichte* has much to do with Lewald's unrequited love for her cousin, Heinrich. She dedicated herself to him in a long distance relationship carried on by letter until she found out that he had fallen in love with her rival, Ida von Hahn Hahn. A further depressing development was that her father pressured her to marry a suitor Lewald did not want to marry. This pressure consisted of a reminder that she was an old maid (ein altes Mädchen) at twenty-five, had five unmarried sisters, and that there was little money for dowries. (*Leidensjahre* 132-137) After Lewald turns down the proposal and faces her prospects, she states that one way of overcoming the misery of unmarried women is to allow them to work and earn their keep ("die Emanzipation der Frauen zu Arbeit und Erwerb.") (139) Many of these ideas, first written down in the autobiography in 1862, appear more fully expressed in the emancipatory essay "Für und wider die Frauen" published in 1870.

Lewald's autobiography can be read as an explanation of how she came to conceive of supporting herself by writing and how she managed to develop a committed readership early in her career. It was of interest to me to read in *Befreiung und Wanderleben* how unsure Lewald was of the direction her life would take even after the

publication of “Modernes Märchen.” After she had a chance to read the fairy tale printed in *Europa*, she reports mixed feelings and doubts about her potential as a writer:

Es gefiel mir mehr und weniger als im Manuskripte. Es las sich besser, es klang vornehmer, nun es sich so glatt anhören ließ, aber es schien mir an Wärme und Leichtigkeit verloren zu haben. Ich wunderte mich, wo ich die guten Einfälle hergenommen ... und wunderte mich ebenso, wo ich den Mut gefunden, diese Spielereien den Menschen zum Lesen anzubieten ... Je weniger mein kleines Märchen mir genug tat, um so mehr drängte es mich , etwas Besseres zu machen und mir selbst in einer größern Arbeit die Überzeugung zu schaffen, dass ich leisten könne, was der Freund mir zu leisten zutraute. (*Befreiung und Wanderleben* 9-10)

She clearly credits seeing the fairy tale in print with the additional encouragement she needed to write the next piece. The importance Lewald placed on “Modernes Märchen” led me examine it more closely. In the process, I found that it has been less examined than her first two novels written shortly after the fairy tale, *Clementine* and *Jenny*. Therefore, there was room for new insights. Since two women narrate the fairy tale and their topic is courtship, I decided to focus on the extent to which Lewald challenged or acquiesced to societal views of women as either future wives, wives or old maids in the fairy tale. The fact that Lewald had revised and republished the fairy tale in another version some twenty years later about the time she was writing her autobiography also added to my interest. The tale was published as “Modernes Märchen” in 1841 and “Tante Renate” in 1862. I extended my study to see if there were distinguishable

differences in the narratives with regard to how Lewald depicted women and their roles at these two times in her life.

Chapter 2: “Modernes Märchen,” A First Piece of Fiction

“I always tell people there’s only one trick to writing: You have to write something that people are willing to pay money to read. It doesn’t have to be very good, necessarily, but somebody, somewhere, has got to be willing to pay money for it.”

Bill Bryson
Travel and Science Writer (2005)

The Story of the Origins of “Modernes Märchen”

Fanny Lewald’s narration of her beginnings as a published author in 1839 commences midway through the second volume of her autobiography written in 1862. (*Leidensjahre* 225-131) Others have retold her story as they discuss the autobiography in conjunction with how she began her writing career. Katherine Goodman notes: “Lewald’s development into a writer was far from a natural and inevitable unfolding of her interests and abilities.” (*Disclosures* 157) Goodman continues with this statement: “Only by accident was she dragged into the profession.” (159) She states further “Careful readers will perceive the role that mere chance played in her success...” (163) And Margaret Ward agrees with this evaluation when she says in her 2006 biography of Lewald, “Chance plays a considerable role in the story.” (81)

According to Lewald, sometime in the fall of 1839, her father brought home an article he had found while reading at a resource room for businessmen. The article was in a popular periodical entitled *Europa*, founded and edited by his cousin, August Lewald. (*Leidensjahre* 225) The article was attributed to an anonymous correspondent from Königsberg, and Fanny Lewald’s father surmised that it had been taken entirely from one of her letters written to August. Between the years of 1835 and 1842, there had been

much public notice of legal proceedings in Königsberg involving a religious sect called the Muckers. (Dreher) During this time, Fanny Lewald had been charged with writing to August about his mother while she lived and settling her affairs after she passed away. In these letters, she included descriptions of happenings in Königsberg to supplement family news. August asked her about the Mucker affair, never indicating that he would publish her writing. (*Leidensjahre* 225) The family held August in the highest regard for his professional accomplishments as a literary critic and editor. Fanny Lewald comments on how her self-esteem increased with the discovery that what she says was carelessly written ended up being published.

Meine Worte und Gedanken sahen mich auf dem weißen Papier mit den schönen schwarzen Lettern und in Gesellschaft mancher bekannten Schriftstellernamen fremd und vornehm an. Es war mir, als befände ich mich plötzlich in kostbarer, mich verschönernder Kleidung in einem prächtigen Saale, von verehrten Menschen gütvoll empfangen. Es tat mir äußerst wohl. (*Leidensjahre* 231)

In writing her autobiography, Lewald called this incident and her cousin's continuing encouragement to write a deciding factor in her life, but she also reports that she had no thought yet at age 28 of becoming a writer. (230)

After describing the Mucker article, Lewald continues her narrative by explaining how she gradually gained more and more independence. Over the winter of 1839-40, she lived away from home in Berlin with relatives. During this crucial time, she came under the mentorship of Sophia Bloch, a socially well-connected woman, encouraged her to become more independent of her family. However, after her stay in Berlin, Lewald was called back to the family home in Königsberg to help with her mother, who was ill.

Another year passed after the Mucker article before August Lewald again enters the story. He asked Fanny Lewald to write a report for *Europa* on the investiture of King Friedrich Wilhelm IV in Königsberg, a ceremony she attended with her family in the fall of 1840. (*Leidensjahre* 276) Lewald happily complied with the request, and her cousin published the account soon after it was submitted near the end of 1840. (“Briefe aus Königsberg” 1840) In her autobiography, Lewald notes that her cousin wrote a letter to her father in which he notes her writing talent. This praise was significant to Lewald and she quotes from the letter, which her father showed her:

Sie ist ohne Frage eine dichterische Natur, und es wäre nicht zu verantworten, wenn sie eine solche Begabung nicht benutzte und ein Feld brachliegen ließe, von dem sie für ihre Zukunft gute Früchte ernten könnte. (*Leidensjahre* 276)

She credits this statement as helping her to imagine herself as a writer in spite of her father’s comment that he was against allowing women to step out of their sphere (“das Heraustreten der Frauen aus ihrer Sphäre.”) (*Leidensjahre* 277) Her father eventually opened up to some degree to the idea that Lewald could engage in writing by establishing a narrow framework within which he would allow and tolerate the use of her free time to write. One of the conditions was that she was not allowed to talk about writing. In the context of relating to her readership the conditions that her father had imposed on her writing, she also informs her readers how wrote her first prose fiction. On New Year’s Day 1841, she sat down to write a fairy tale and at one sitting produced “Modernes Märchen.”

Lewald, at this point in her autobiography, still maintains that she had no thought of publishing this fairy tale. (*Leidensjahre* 280-281) At first, Lewald obeyed her father’s

wish to keep knowledge of her writing confined to the immediate family, and she read the fairy tale aloud only to her family. Her sisters liked it, but her father disliked the use of fantasy in the fairy tale. His disapproval led Lewald to write a more realistic short story, “Der Stellvertreter,” in the hopes that her father would find it more to his liking. However, her father and brother judged it negatively, and her brother even made fun of it. In the face of this negative judgment, Lewald decided to seek her cousin’s opinion on the two stories and asked her father’s permission to send them to him. (*Leidensjahre* 281-283) The result was two letters from August, this time addressed to Fanny Lewald, not her father. The letters contained an honorarium check and the information that both short stories would be published. She credits this encouragement with finally emboldening her to stand up against her father and ask his permission to become a writer as a means of making a living. She quotes herself as making this statement to her father:

Ich meine, wenn ich arbeite, so ziehe ich die gelben Glacé-Handschuhe aus und fasse die Dinge fest und mit nackter Hand an. Wenn ich schreiben soll, so muß ich ganz heraussagen können, was ich denke, und jedes Thema berühren, das mir dazu angemessen scheint. Ich kann keine Rücksicht nehmen auf dasjenige, was du von mir zu hören wünschest... Auf die Weise wie bisher...kann ich dauernd dann nicht weiterleben. Wenn ich die Mittel dazu erwerben kann, muß ich die Welt sehen und freier mit Menschen, mit Männern, die mich fördern, verkehren können, als es hier bei uns am Teetisch, in Gegenwart von euch und von fünf Schwestern geschehen konnte. (285-286)

Her father gave his permission with the condition that she must publish anonymously. His reputation as a provider for his family would suffer if she put her name on the stories.

Also her sisters feared that their chances of marrying might be diminished if she became identified as a writer. (*Leidensjahre* 287) Lewald uses the narration of the circumstances surrounding the publication of “Modernes Märchen” and the launching of her career to bring the volume *Leidensjahre* to a dramatic conclusion by stating that she had now entered into the magic gardens of poetry or “die Zaubergärten der Poesie.” (287)

To describe events, conversations and thought processes that had taken place some twenty years prior to the writing of the autobiography, Lewald needed help to recall details from memory. In the third volume of the autobiography, *Befreiung und Wanderleben*, she notes that she went back to reread for the first time in many years letters and her manuscripts. (12) She speaks with pride about her first writing efforts and that getting published was the beginning of her breaking out to become self-supporting.

By examining original copies of the description of the investiture and “Modernes Märchen” as published in *Europa*, it is possible to determine that Lewald made factual errors in her autobiography in stating when “Modernes Märchen” was written. The investiture itself and the publication of the article on it took place near the end of 1840. However, in *Leidensjahre*, Lewald states that she began to write “Modernes Märchen” at the beginning of 1840. (280) Just a couple of pages later, Lewald quotes words of praise for her writing of “Modernes Märchen” from August’s letter to her from June 24, 1840. If, as she claims, the publication of the investiture article and August’s praise for it inspired her to write the fairy tale, then she began to write it early in 1841 after the investiture had taken place. That means that the date given for the letter from August must be an error. By 1861/2, when she wrote the autobiography, a number of her friends and family, who might have been able to corroborate events and when they occurred, had

already passed away. In addition, she had limited access to copies of what she had published in periodicals and her voluminous correspondence was dispersed among many recipients in diverse locations. It is important to be aware that, though Lewald should be taken as an authority on her own life, she lacked some of the resources now available to verify her account.

It is interesting to note that, though it is now possible to detect such errors, other errors are still cropping up in current scholarship on Lewald. For example, though Margaret Ward read Lewald's description of the investiture in *Europa*, she repeats the errors made by Lewald regarding when "Modernes Märchen" was written and published in her text and chronology. (*Fanny Lewald* 87, 393-396) When Hanna Ballin Lewis translated Lewald's description in *Leidensjahre* of how she wrote "Modernes Märchen," Lewis repeats the date of 1840 as written by Lewald and also erroneously translates the title as "A Modern Fairy Tale." (*The Education of Fanny Lewald* 211) In an endnote, Lewis again lists the title of the fairy tale erroneously as "Ein modernes Märchen" before she correctly refers to the fact that the story was republished as "Tante Renate" in *Bunte Bilder* in 1862. (326) Jarvis and Blackwell also list the title incorrectly as "Ein modernes Märchen" in their references, though it is clear that they made their translation from the original "Modernes Märchen" as published in 1841. (*The Queen's Mirror* 184) There is another error to be noted with regard to Lewald's first publications. Goodman misinterprets when she writes about the investiture article:

Lewald's description...so pleased her cousin that he requested permission to print it. He then wrote her father testifying to her literary talent, amazed that she had not considered writing herself. (*Disclosures* 159)

Goodman's claim that August asked permission to print the description after he had read it contradicts Lewald's statement that August asked her to write the report so that he could publish it. (*Leidensjahre* 276) Goodman's overall interpretation of *Meine Lebensgeschichte* is respected, but this misreading of what Lewald actually said lends some confusion to some of Goodman's analysis. Goodman holds that Lewald shaped her autobiography in the pattern of Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, but calls Lewald's attempt an "inappropriate appropriation of a male form of autobiography." (163)

Goodman maintains further that Lewald attempts to present her life story as one driven by her inner desire for independence and by her need to express her talent for writing with emancipation as an end result. She, however, argues that Lewald undermines the argument that she was in some way destined to be a writer when she explicitly details the suffering, self-doubts and chance involved in getting published. (163)

The increasing availability of original texts as reprints and in digital form plus greater accessibility to archival material makes it possible to corroborate and clarify what Lewald wrote. What is apparent in looking at the corrected dates is that once she got started, Lewald wrote and managed to get published quickly to begin her career. Within about a year in 1841, she wrote two short stories, "Modernes Märchen" and "Der Stellvertreter" and two novels, *Clementine* and *Jenny*, with their publication dates occurring in 1841, 1842 and 1843. Lewald's brother, Otto, helped her negotiate with Brockhaus for the publication of her first novels so she quickly branched out from August Lewald's help. She continued to honor her father's request that she publish anonymously until sometime after he died in 1846. The novel, *Eine Lebensfrage*, does not carry her name, and she published the satire, *Diogenes*, under a pseudonym in 1847. She finally

gave up the attempt to remain anonymous when her reading public began to guess her identity.

In addition to being prolific in publishing new material over the years, Lewald also returned to her earliest works and revised them around the time she began to work on her autobiography in the 1860s. This revision work continued as she cooperated in the publication of her collected works in the 1870s. So, for example, there are two versions of Lewald's first novel, *Clementine*, one from 1842 and one from 1872. Also, the 1861/62 version of *Meine Lebensgeschichte* was revised in 1871. Therefore, it is important when referencing what Lewald wrote to be clear on when the piece was published or revised and republished and from which version of a text one is quoting.

“Modernes Märchen” as Published in *Europa*

Europa, Chronik der gebildeten Welt is the full title of the periodical in which “Modernes Märchen” first appeared. August Lewald founded *Europa* in 1835 and continued as its editor for 11 years. In an introduction to volume one from 1841 also entitled “Europa,” August indicates his purpose in establishing the periodical. He states that he saw a need for a publication that appealed to the educated, artists and the fashionable in good society. He explains that his aim was to improve society with a periodical of refined and elegant tone dedicated to genteel entertainment. (August Lewald 2) The periodical was popular and ceased publication after 50 years in 1885. Knowing that August Lewald actively solicited contributions for this journal from Fanny Lewald, it seems that her writing was a good fit for this journal and the readership that he envisioned for it.

Some issues of *Europa* are available to the public as originally printed. These issues, usually published quarterly, are bound in volumes by year and reside in libraries and archives. In recent years, a number of issues of *Europa* have become available to contemporary readers through digitization, though there are gaps in the digitization with some issues missing. The majority of digital copies are available through the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. A closer look at *Europa* quickly reveals the content presented in each issue is highly diverse. For example, the issues from 1841, which contain “Modernes Märchen,” include pieces from a variety of countries: England, France, Holland, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Turkey, Moldova and America. These issues contain a travel article by George Sand and an excerpt from a novel by Fenimore Cooper. From Germany, there are critiques of theater and opera pieces, biography, “Novellen” and “Novelleten”, letters from correspondents in Berlin and Frankfurt, and even a travel sketch on the North Sea Island of Wangerooge by Adolf Stahr, the gymnasium professor and literary historian Fanny Lewald eventually married. In addition to text, some issues contain pages of sheet music and colored illustrations of women’s fashions. Thus Lewald produced a first piece of fiction that was published in a popular periodical among diverse works from distinguished German and international authors.

Lewald on “Modernes Märchen”

In the rest of this chapter, I will note several more of Lewald’s comments about the origin of “Modernes Märchen” from her autobiography and point out how the fairy tale was interpreted in her time and is interpreted now. According to Lewald, her starting place for writing “Modernes Märchen” is a conversation she remembered on the

similarity of the facial features of some people with animals. She ties that conversation to the topic of the transmigration of souls, the idea that souls can pass into successive body forms, human or animal. She records what she remembers of her thoughts in

Leidensjahre as follows:

Ich hatte im stillen daran gedacht inwieweit die äußere Tierähnlichkeit sich im Innern der betreffenden Personen wiederfinden würde, und wie die Anzahl derjenigen gar nicht klein sei, deren unkultivierte Instinkte sie den Tieren verwandter machte als dem durchgebildeten Menschen (*Leidensjahr* 281)

She makes the negative assessment that a considerable number of people are still controlled by uncultivated instincts that make them more closely related to animals than to educated or cultivated people. In creating the tale, she enlarges upon the idea of such instincts by introducing “Wandelgestalten” or “Halbwesen,” animals in human form she describes as follows.

So hatte ich denn in meinem Märchen sich ein junges Frauenzimmer in einen Herrn von Salm verlieben lassen, der nur ein Mensch gewordener Fisch war; und die junge Schöne entging dem Schicksal, sich mit einem solchen Halbwesen zu verbinden, nur dadurch, dass eine alte hellseherische Tante, die durch ähnliche Lebenserfahrungen gegangen, das Mysterium verriet und das Mädchen errettete. Ein paar andere solcher Wandelgestalten liefen noch nebenher, einige Salonszenen gingen dazwischen vor...(*Leidensjahre* 281)

The young beauty is named Bertha and she meets von Salm and his friend when they arrive at a Berlin social gathering as strangers from out of town. Her elderly and unmarried aunt, Renate, recognizes von Salm as a fish in the form of a man, thus

unsuitable to court her niece. Tante Renate is moved to tell of her own courtship experience years before, a courtship aborted when she magically became empowered to see her fiancé as a frightening animal. Having gained this power as an 18-year old, the fifty-year old aunt is able to discern the potential danger in von Salm's courtship of Bertha. Further, she devises a way to rescue her niece. Thereafter, Bertha recovers from her attachment to von Salm and finds a suitable husband.

Criticism and Opinions on “Modernes Märchen” Then and Now

Lewald sets the story in Berlin in the 1840s, current with when it was written, and identifies it as “modern” in the title. Thus, Lewald chooses a modern setting of time and place rather than the indefinite past of fairy tale beginnings such as “Es war einmal”, “vor langer, langer Zeit,” or “once upon a time.” For the most part, Lewald establishes the story as a fairy tale when she employs magical elements in the story of how Tante Renate develops and uses her power to see the animal nature of half-human creatures who have assumed the outward form of men.

Lewald records mixed reactions among her family members when she read “Modernes Märchen” to them. Lewald related her father's objection that it was not believable to insert fairy tale elements into a story of the Berlin he knew.

Er fand dies Hin und Her von Wirklichkeit und Phantastik nicht nach seinem Geschmack, meinte, ein Märchen müsse man in fremde Länder oder in vergangene Zeiten hineinverlegen, bei denen man ohnehin die Dinge auf Treue und Glauben nehmen müsse. So mitten aus seiner Umgebung heraus Wunder hervorspringen zu lassen, habe etwas zu Unvernünftiges selbst für die Phantasie,

und man müsse den Menschen nicht das Unmögliche zu glauben zumuten.

(*Leidensjahre* 281)

On the other hand, Fanny Lewald quotes her cousin, August, when he accepted the fairy tale for publication, as writing, “Glaube mir! – Dein Märchen ist sehr hübsch und mir lieber als Dein “Stellvertreter.” (*Leidensjahre* 284) August also specifically praised her talent for inventiveness or “Erfindung.” This praise and his suggestion that she write a longer piece of fiction provided a counterweight to her father’s criticism and spurred her on to write her first novel, *Clementine*, published in 1843.

Further comments in Lewald’s autobiography offer insight into what she was thinking about writing the fairy tale. She disagrees with her father’s opinion that fairy tales should be set in the long ago and far away and claims that the definition of a fairy tale that he used to judge her work is far too narrow:

Er verwies mich in Bezug auf das Märchen auf meine Lieblingsmärchen, die der tausendundeinen Nacht, und auf Musäus Volksmärchen, vergaß aber daß Callot-Hoffmann die Zügellosigkeit und Willkür der Phantastik in die Gegenwart übertragen hatte und daß die Berechtigung, dies zu tun, für das Märchen von dem Augenblicke an vorhanden war, in welchem jemand sich die Gegenwart mit phantastischer Willkür belebt und zerstört vorstellen konnte. (*Leidensjahre* 282)

In a note for her English translation of this passage in *The Education of Fanny Lewald*, Hanna Ballin Lewis says that Callot-Hoffmann refers to Jacques Callot (1592-1635) and E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776-1822). Callot was known for his etchings of current day Florence street life and Hoffman for the use of present day settings in fairy tales. (Lewis 326) Lewald uses the reference to Callot-Hoffmann to defend her use of fantasy in a

modern-day setting. Lewald continues with the idea that the use of fantasy allows freedom from restraint and a kind of whimsicality or capriciousness that can invigorate and disrupt the present. She also calls a fairy tale a type of playfulness or “Spielerei.” (*Leidensjahre* 282)

The number of comments available on Lewald’s fairy tale is limited. In a 2007 blog by Liz Henry entitled “Fantastic lit, fairy tales, and women writers,” she praises Lewald’s awareness that fantasy has a disruptive nature through lack of restraint and capriciousness. In saying this, Henry uses terminology very similar to what Lewald uses.

In “Modernes Märchen,” Lewald refers to other tales involving fantasy and their authors in the conversations of the main characters, Bertha and Tante Renate. The first narrator in “Modernes Märchen” is Bertha, who reports on a visit to her grandparents and aunt to read to them. Bertha reads from “Der grüne Domino,” a comedy written in 1811 by Karl Körner. The passage mentions a race of fish in human form and brutal, but gallant lovers in a play that has to do with two young women discussing lovers’ identities hidden behind masks. Lewald uses this passage to trigger a change of narrator from Bertha to Tante Renate. What appeared humorous to Bertha in the passage from “Der grüne Domino,” utterly upsets Renate and brings her to the point that she is compelled to reveal the tale of her own courtship as a warning to Bertha. Renate’s tale told within the frame of Bertha’s tale is of a courtship that ends abruptly when Renate has a vision of her fiancé as an animal in human form, a devouring eagle. It is Renate’s newly gained insight or power of clairvoyance that ends her chances of marrying. Furthermore, she retains the magical power as she ages into an “old maid.” She is, therefore, able to see her niece’s suitor as a fish disguised as a man and thus warn her of imminent danger.

Lewald has Tante Renate refer to several other fairy tales such as *Undine* by de la Motte Fouqué and “The Little Mermaid” by Andersen as well as the characters, Tomcat Murr and Hound Braganza, by E. T. A. Hoffmann. In her role of narrator, Renate cites these examples of animal/human transformation along with Körner’s reference to fish in order to support her statement that animals can transform themselves into human form. Thus, Lewald links the story to fairy tale traditions with which she and readers of *Europa* were familiar through its internal content as well as by putting “Mährchen” in the title.

Lewald also establishes by internal references that she has chosen an astutely intelligent woman, Tante Renate, as her main storyteller. Renate invokes the philosophy of Spinoza (1632-1677) to establish that she has something important to say. Renate introduces her story to Bertha by saying:

Du hast vielleicht schon gehört, daß ein tiefdenkender Philosoph, der erhabene Spinoza, uns das Geheimniß der Schöpfung so erklärt hat, daß ein Allmächtiges, Ursprüngliches, die Gottheit, das ganze Universum erfülle, daß sich aber ihr Daseyn und Wirken verschieden offenbare, je nach der mehr oder minder vollkommenen Form des Geschaffenen, in dem sie wirkt. (“Modernes Mährchen” 198)

If Bertha will listen, Renate will disclose the secrets of creation she has been able to discern.

With regard to Tante Renate and her role in the story, John Gardner comments that German literary fairy tales often have a magical older woman as a storyteller. In Gardner’s introduction to *German Literary Fairy Tales*, a book edited by Frank Ryder and Robert Browing, he describes the telling of a story to a child that is “*like* but not *the*

same as the child's real-life story." The narration is a means to distance the story and help the child through a problem. With this help, the child comes out a winner because the child has such virtues as "innocence, good-heartedness, sensitivity, [and] alert intelligence." (Ryder & Browning x-xi) Tante Renate fulfills the role of magical helper while Bertha possesses the child-like virtues. Renate's narration helps Bertha navigate the new experiences of courtship. Once Bertha hears the story, she is convinced that she should listen to her aunt and distance herself from von Salm.

Margaret Ward in her biography of Lewald discusses the form of "Modernes Märchen" as that of "a fairy tale in the manner of E. T. A. Hoffmann." She notes that "the tale is treated lightly and humorously, and the first-person narrative is appropriately naïve." (87) Ward brings out the importance of the collaboration between aunt and niece in getting rid of Bertha's suitor before the fish/man can propose. It is Ward's opinion that the tale shows that by working together using wisdom and common sense, women can protect themselves from dangerous men. (88) Thus Ward reads into the story a clear theme of female empowerment and collaboration that overcomes the problem of courtship by the wrong sort of suitor.

A translation of the story into English with the title "A Modern Fairy Tale, 1841" can be found in the 2001 edited volume by Jarvis and Blackwell entitled *The Queen's Mirror: Fairy Tales by German Women, 1780-1900*. Blackwell, in her introduction to this collection of fairy tales, classifies Lewald's story as "a merman story" involving "human/nonhuman transformation." (Jarvis & Blackwell 6) She also comments that Lewald's tale fits the mirror theme chosen for the fairy tale collection title in that a mirror-like surface can reflect and reveal the "bad character of one's mate." (7) Jarvis and

Blackwell note the tale's use of the element of clairvoyance, which they call "second sight" in their translation, as being centered "on a quest to see and learn the essence of things." (183)

Jack Zipes, editor of *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* comments on "Modernes Märchen" and its take on the mermaid theme as follows:

Here Lewald stands the traditional story of the mermaid in search of a soul on its head when a slimy sea creature disguised as a cold fish of a man seeks redemption through a human mate, and the female protagonist thwarts his attempts to gain 'humanity.' (156)

He singles out the fairy tale elements in "Modernes Märchen" as a way of taking "issue with marriage conventions and patriarchal narratives." A 2003 review of *The Queen's Mirror* by Danielle M. Roemer also notes that Lewald's fairy tale addresses "the superficiality of the 'marriage market' for young women at the time." (Roemer 162) Thus a variety of readers of the tale, both in Lewald's time and more recently, see elements of in this fairy tale that question courtship and marriage conventions during Lewald's lifetime.

Summary

Lewald claims that "Modernes Märchen," her first published piece of fiction, was written, not so much to be published, but rather as a form of self-expression. When she submitted it to August Lewald for his opinion, he accepted it for publication, praised her inventiveness and paid her for it. She seems to go out of her way to show that she asked permission from her father at several points along the way and also agreed to

publish anonymously. Thus her “breaking out” to become a writer is accomplished with the support of her family and even the active help of two relatives, her cousin August, and her oldest brother, Otto.

Two ideas stand out regarding Lewald’s narrative of the origins of “*Modernes Märchen*” and her early publishing history. The first is that she had a clear sense of what would interest readers and be marketable in the 1840s. With all of her first efforts at fiction, short stories and novels, she correctly judged what issues to tackle and addressed those issues in a way that helped her build her own reading public. She was able to advocate for more rights for women and Jews, for religious tolerance, and for the right to divorce, for example. The second idea is that she was well connected through her immediate and extended family and people they knew to engage in literary production and discourse in Berlin society and beyond. Her interactions with August Lewald and Sophie Bloch, both relatives on her father’s side, have already been mentioned. When she needed to remain anonymous, her brother Otto helped as her agent for a number of years and Karl August Varnhagen, the husband of salonière Rahel Levin, lent her support on a number of occasions. The list of the many political, literary and social figures she connected with early in her career is long and includes Heinrich Heine, Berthold Auerbach, Fanny Hensel-Mendelssohn, Felix Mendelssohn and Franz Liszt among many others.

There are several elements of “*Modernes Märchen*” that appear to question or challenge prevailing social norms regarding courtship and marriage. In the next chapter, I will go into greater depth on the characters and content of “*Modernes Märchen*” as they relate to women’s roles and marriage. A specific focus will be to identify what

remained the same and what changed as Lewald revised “Modernes Märchen” and republished it as “Tante Renate” after a lapse of 20 years in 1862.

Chapter 3: “Modernes Märchen Becomes “Tante Renate”

“...for there’s nothing in the world so bad for some women as marriage, he thought; ...”

Virginia Woolf
Mrs. Dalloway (1925)

“Zukünftige Ehefrauen”—Young Women in the Courtship Process

In “Modernes Märchen” and its revision as “Tante Renate,” Lewald presents the courtship process as beginning when Bertha and Renate become just old enough to be presented to society as fifteen and eighteen year olds. Each, by virtue of gender, is considered a prospective wife or “zukünftige Ehefrau,” entering what can be considered to be a marriage market in which young women attempt to attract a husband. Renate’s courtship process occurs when the French army marched and retreated across northern Germany in the early 1800s, while Bertha’s takes place some 30 years later. Yet the basic conditions of courtship are remarkably similar—a young woman’s role is to be ready to attract the attention of an older, established man, who will then propose marriage. It is of interest to this study to examine the qualities Bertha and Renate expressed that contributed to their attractiveness, keeping in mind the ideal future wife as described by Campe.

Lewald first introduces the fifteen-year old Bertha as she describes herself attending her first party one winter in the 1840s in Berlin:

Ich stand fest an Tante Renatens Fauteuil gelehnt, denn ich hatte es noch nicht so weit gebracht, mich selbstständig und frei in der Gesellschaft zu bewegen, und war erst dann recht froh, wenn ich an einem Ofen, in einer Fensternische oder

hinter irgend einem Stuhle einen festen Standpunkt gewonnen hatte. (“Modernes Märchen” 194)

Lewald describes a main venue of courtship, a salon-like social gathering held in the home of Bertha’s grandparents. Scheduled at the start of the winter social season, such a party gives a multiage group of people the opportunity for music, dancing, card playing, witty conversation and strolling around the rooms to see and be seen. Lewald’s description matches closely with sections from *Meine Lebensgeschichte* in which she tells of the social gatherings she attended as a school girl and on through her teens and twenties in the homes of several wealthy Jewish families in Königsberg. (*Im Vaterhause* 168-170)

In this setting, Lewald presents Bertha as an observer, a wallflower, shy about conversing, embarrassed by attention from men and unable to make small talk except while dancing. Others also observe Bertha, as the youngest girl present. Her aunt’s observation is that Bertha displays “vollkommene Arglosigkeit” and “glückliche Unbefangenheit.” (“Modernes Märchen” 202) Jarvis and Blackwell translate these terms as “complete ingenuousness” and “blissful innocence.” (“A Modern Fairy Tale” 192)

The participants at the party, acquaintances and relatives reassembling after the summer spent at spas or in country houses, know each other from past social seasons. Therefore, the appearance of handsome and elegant men from out of town triggers excitement. Bertha observes that the other young women at the party primp and vie for attention from the new arrivals. These young women are more experienced and older than Bertha, having been through other social seasons, but have not attracted marriage proposals yet. Bertha’s cousin, Franz, a hometown suitor, observes that the men new to

the group pay attention to Bertha, but he questions what they could possibly see in such a gawky girl. (“Modernes Märchen” 196) The two men do the socially correct thing and initiate a social call to Bertha’s parents the morning after the party; and they quickly establish that one of them, von Salm, is wooing Bertha when they pay special attention to her at other social gatherings or are invited back to visit in her home. The other young women from the social circle observe the developing courtship and tease Bertha:

Die jungen Damen nannten mich nun absichtlich die “kleine” Einstädt, obgleich ich gewiß nicht klein war, sie wollten nur zeigen, daß sie mich keineswegs für ihres Gleichen erkannt hätten, und behandelten mich ganz wie ein kleines Kind.
(“Modernes Märchen 197)

Such aspects of the story illustrate the competitive atmosphere of courtship as a marriage market. Her parents approve and facilitate the courtship, flattered that their only child is making a conquest by attracting von Salm’s attention. Lewald shows that Bertha gamely navigates the social scene, displaying virtues of geniality and prudence. Lewald portrays her further as a dutiful daughter in that she visits her grandparents weekly to read to them. She displays kindheartedness to all of her family--parents, grandparents, and aunt. One can check off most of the qualities that Campe recommends as important to a “zukünftige Ehefrau” as Lewald unfolds Bertha’s character. Youth, purity, and innocence stand out as important to Bertha’s attractiveness.

Renate narration in “Modernes Märchen” contains similar information about how she displayed all the qualities that Campe considered essential for zukünftige Ehefrauen when she met Obrist Belaigle, a colonel known for his bravery, in her home when she was 18.

Ich war jung und gut und liebte den stattlichen Mann bald von Herzen; jede Falte meines Gemütes lag offen vor ihm, und er schien sich mit Entzücken an dem Reichthum zu weiden, den meine Seele bei ihrem ersten Erwachen ihm bot... ich war so selig im Liebegeben, daß ich Nichts entbehrte. ("Modernes Märchen" 199)

Lewald invents a word, "Liebegeben," to emphasize the one-sidedness of the relationship in which Renate opens her heart to him, but he doesn't do the same. Instead he grazes or feasts on such richness. Lewald's word choice of "weiden" is a preliminary signal that Belaigle may be more animal than human, but the young Renate is portrayed as too full of bliss to notice. An engagement takes place with the approval of Renate's parents. Though in some ways, Lewald gives parallel stories of what happened first in Renate's past and then what happens during Bertha's courtship, a big difference is that Renate begins to have doubts about her engagement when she finds out that her fiancé devalues religion, decency, and self-restraint, some of Renate's core values. Lewald reveals that Renate is a pious person in that she acts on her perceptions and prays to God for a way out. There is no reference to religion or piety in regard to Bertha, a much less developed character than Renate. However, Lewald presents the two women as models of feminine virtue by description and action and also as being successful in navigating courtship.

The aspect of Renate's behavior that differentiates her from Bertha is her insight that there is something amiss with Colonel Belaigle and Baron von Salm that may mean they are not suitable as husbands. In reference to her fiancé, Renate shouts: "Rettet mich, rettet mich!...schafft den Adler hinaus, oder ich sterbe." (201) She recognizes his lack of certain human qualities and voices her insight. Bertha, in

comparison, can sense only that von Salm has very cold hands, while Renate can see his fish-like nature. Renate is less dramatic in voicing this insight to von Salm than she was in shouting at Belaigle, but she is still effective in frightening him away when she gives him some advice. She tells Bertha “daß ich ihm dringend rathe, Berlin zu verlassen und an’s Meer ... zurückzukehren.” (203) Both the colonel and von Salm think that they have been recognized as “Halbmenschen” and abruptly depart, terminating the courtships without socially proper leave taking. Thus, it is Renate’s insight or clairvoyance and breaking of the silence that saves both virtuous young women from being swept along passively in the courtship process into unhappy marriages.

According to Campe, it is not possible for a woman to know what kind of a husband, good or bad, a man might be until she has been married for some time. His advice to listen to one’s parents implies that they have the experience to foresee potential problems, but Lewald sets this story up such that neither Renate’s nor Bertha’s parents sense the animal nature of their daughters’ suitors. Only Renate can and does judge for herself, and in the years following the termination of her engagement, she helps other young women avoid bad marriages.

Transmigration of Souls and “Halbmenschen”

At the dramatic center of “Modernes Märchen” is Tante Renate’s story of her engagement and the discovery of the animal nature of her fiancé that brought her engagement to an end. In the story Tante Renate narrates, she calls the phenomenon that animals can sometimes take human form, “Seelenwanderung,” a type of transmigration of souls. As she introduces the concept, she says

Ich glaube aber fest, dass die Thiere eine Seele haben, ähnlich der unsern, und daß es dieser Seele gegeben ist, auf eine gewisse Zeit ihre äußere Gestalt zu verlassen und eine andere, eine menschliche Gestalt anzunehmen. (“Modernes Märchen” 195-196)

According to Renate, this transmigration is temporary. An animal that has assumed the shape of a man needs to win the heart of a young innocent woman to make the transformation to human form secure and irreversible:

Diese Umwandlung geschieht nur momentan, es sei denn, dass es diesen verwandelten Thieren gelingt, die erste Liebe eines Menschenherzens zu gewinnen. Diese Liebe befestigt sie geistig in der Menschengestalt und sichert ihr Leben in derselben. – Dagegen führt sie nur zu häufig den Tod des Menschen herbei, der Alles, was Geist und Herz Großes und Schönes besitzen, seiner ersten Liebe opfert, und, einen Ersatz für diese Gaben empfangend, mindestens einem geistigen Verarmen unterliegt, wenn er sich nicht mit allen seinen Kräften an die Natur und seinen Mitmenschen aufschließt und sich dadurch dem reinsten Quell der Gottheit nähert. (“Modernes Märchen” 199)

The union benefits the “Halbmensch,” but victimizes the woman. Such a marriage results in a sacrifice of the young woman’s humanness, if not her life. Renate’s warning to Bertha a bit later in the story goes as follows:

Du sollst nicht einem jener Halbmenschen zur Beute werden, Du sollst niemals die Welt in jener nackten, eisigen Wirklichkeit kennen lernen, vor der das warme Herz erstarrt. (“Modernes Märchen” 202)

Thus, it is possible that the true nature of husbands poses a danger to innocent wives, sentencing them to a life of emotional impoverishment or even death!

In Lewald's fairy tale, both Renate's and Bertha's first suitors are characterized as "Halbmenschen." These "Halbmenschen" are magical or fantasy figures. It does not seem that the very negative consequences of such a marriage can be overcome, as Campe says, by the courage and fortitude of a virtuous wife. The expected sequence that Renate and Bertha move from attracting suitors to being courted and then to their destiny of marriage has to be disrupted by terminating the courtship to protect the women.

By calling upon the concept of transmigration of souls and the resulting "Halbmenschen," Lewald is able to break with the fairy tale convention of the gallant man who comes to rescue the virtuous young woman and marry her to provide a happy end to the tale. As she has Tante Renate tell her story, the reader begins to realize that the man may appear to be gallant, but by his nature is using the marriage for his own purposes, to allow him to remain in the desired human form, rather than to return to an animal form. What is even worse is that the marriage to such a man is detrimental to the young woman's future. There is not likely to be a happy ending for her if she acquiesces to the marriage. Though "Modernes Märchen" is written as though it were meant as an entertaining fairy tale, Lewald includes the message that there is danger awaiting a young woman if she accepts the man who seeks her hand in marriage without questioning his inward qualities. Also in this questioning, she needs help beyond that given by parents or the approved socializing of the courtship process. She needs the help of a woman with special insight or clairvoyance.

Developing and Using Clairvoyance

The part of Renate's story in which she develops clairvoyance refers to a number of fantasy or magical elements that contribute to making "Modernes Märchen" a fairy tale. Lewald introduces a dream sequence as Renate relates how she fell asleep after asking God to help her get out of her engagement. In the dream, various people appear including her former nursemaid from childhood, her fiancé with his regiment, and some children at a convent. She sees things from her childhood such as pictures and clothing, but of most importance is a book of spells that once belonged to her nursemaid. When she awakes, she remembers the book of spells and turns to it for advice. Though she would like to regard the book as nonsense with its remedies for freckles and how to avoid the evil eye, statement that seems to fit her situation surprises her:

“ein Mägdlein geboren in der Tag- und Nachtgleiche im Frühjahr, so diese auf einen Sonntag fällt, kann Wundersames erfahren, wenn das Aequinoctium und somit des Mägdleins Geburtstag an einem Sonntage wiederkehrt. Ist sie in Liebe entbrannt und nicht glücklich, so stelle sie sich um Mittag an einen Kreuzweg und merke wohl auf, was sie sieht. Sie schweige aber, wo ihr ihr Leben lieb ist, ausser um Jemand von ihrem Hause zu warnen in gleichem Fall, denn Vielwissen macht Kopfweh.“ (“Modernes Märchen” 200-201)

Renate, spurred on by curiosity and the doubts she has about her up-coming marriage, breaks with the social custom that a young woman stays indoors or goes about chaperoned. Instead, Renate goes alone to a crossroad on her birthday, expecting something unusual to take place. As the clock strikes noon, she has a bewitched vision of people with animal-like characteristics and the Angel of Death. In shock, she makes it

back home safely, identifies her fiancé as a violent eagle and saves herself from a bad marriage. (“Modernes Märchen” 202) Thus, even though she is just eighteen, Renate is portrayed as able to break away from some of the social restrictions that keep a young woman in a protected environment. Not only is she equipped to protect herself, but she also breaks the rule of silence codified in the spell book and identifies Colonel Belaigle as a “Halbmensch.”

Renate breaks the rule of silence again in telling Bertha the story. This story is dramatic and scary as seen in Bertha’s reaction to it. Bertha says:

Ich schauerte vor Angst und eine Ahnung von Unheil, das mir bevorstände,
tauchte plötzlich in mir auf. (202)

However, the telling accomplishes its purpose. Renate kisses away Bertha’s tears and holds her upon her knees. They bond almost as mother and daughter; and Bertha pleads for Renate to do whatever is necessary to get rid of von Salm. Such sharing of tenderness mitigates, somewhat, the toll that it has taken on Renate to lose her first love, to turn down other offers of marriage and to age into an “alte Jungfer.”

An “alte Jungfer”

Lewald introduces Renate as an “alte Jungfer” at the beginning of “Modernes Märchen” as she is seen through Bertha’s eyes and before Renate’s tale fills in her backstory. To Bertha, Renate at 50 years of age appears attractive, even beautiful, but she dresses in black like a nun. Bertha regards her aunt as dear and sweet, but her designation as a Sunday’s child is an eerie mystery and a matter of curiosity. Renate has assumed a role of pronouncing judgment as to whether a man is suitable as a marriage

partner, and she inspires awe, if not fear, that she might send a suitor away. As an “alte Jungfer,” Renate still lives with her parents, Bertha’s grandparents. Therefore, she is in attendance and converses with those who attend social gatherings where she lives though she no longer participates in the marriage market. She converses easily on topics of discussion such as literature and transmigration of souls. The out- of-town visitors form a good opinion of her, calling her “eine ungemein geistreiche und scharfsinnige Dame.” (“Modernes Märchen” 196) Bertha is favorably inclined to her aunt at the beginning of the tale because they were both born on Sunday.

When Renate finally decides to open up to warn Bertha that her suitor is a cold fish, she reveals with bitter tears that being a Sunday’s child with clairvoyant powers has made her life one of misery and suffering:

Du wirst bemerkt haben, wie ich in meinen Ansichten über den Zusammenhang der Menschen- und der Geisterwelt, oft von allen Andern abweiche, und hast mich selbst wohl manchmal der Bizarrierie beschuldigt: ein Sonntagskind, dessen Augen geöffnet sind, sieht aber Alles anders und richtiger, und verliert dadurch in gewisser Beziehung den Zusammenhang mit den übrigen Menschen. Ein Sonntagskind ist hellsehend, wenn es eine unglückliche Liebe, reinen Herzens, ohne alle Bitterkeit überlebt hat. (“Modernes Märchen” 198)

Thus clairvoyance has to do with seeing everything differently and more correctly. She claims that she has put the loss of her first love behind her without bitterness. Yet she goes on to say that the cost of seeing clearly is a loss of peace of mind and a life of unspeakable suffering. (“Modernes Märchen” 202) The fairy tale delivers the message that the life of an “alte Jungfer” compares unfavorably with being a wife. However, the

message is also clear that a woman does not have to wait until after marriage and living with a man to find out what he is like. A woman with insight or access to a beloved aunt can avoid marriage to a man of bad character.

Revising the Fairy Tale to be “Tante Renate”

Lewald revised “Modernes Märchen” and republished it as “Tante Renate” in 1862 for a collection of short stories and fantasy pieces called *Bunte Bilder*. Lewald introduces this collection by acknowledging that a younger generation of readers has come along who have never read her early works. (*Bunte Bilder* iii) She notes that descriptions of her early fiction in *Meine Lebensgeschichte* have made readers curious and that her readers are asking to read pieces that are out of print or scattered in a variety of different publication. She sees the stories she selected for the collection as colorful snapshots of times past,

als den Ausdruck eines augenblicklichen Empfindens und Denkens, als Spiegelung wechselnder Tage und Stimmungen, als Verkörperung träumerischer Willkühr. (*Bunte Bilder* iv)

Also in the introduction, she talks about herself as “der Schriftsteller” and uses the masculine third person pronoun “er” in looking back on past creative efforts in her career. (*Bunte Bilder* iii) Similarly, in *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, she recalls the time after she had published her first two novels in the 1840s. She calls herself “der einzige weibliche Schriftsteller” living in Königsberg to emphasize that she had no women colleagues with whom to associate. (*Befreiung und Wanderleben* 224) Lewald had a sense of

achievement and that she had broken new paths as she looks back on her first published pieces.

When Lewald revised “Modernes Märchen” and published it in *Bunte Bilder* as “Tante Renate,” she left the gist of the story line the same. However, Lewald did more than just select the piece and reprint it with a title change. She made a variety of other changes, so there exist two distinct versions, one from 1841 and one from 1862.

In revising “Modernes Märchen” to become “Tante Renate,” Lewald altered nearly every sentence. There are changes in verb tenses, word choices, and also rephrasing and expansion of certain ideas. Some changes in word choice make little difference to the story flow. For example, when we first encounter Bertha at the party at her grandparent’s home, she stands next to and leans on Tante Renate’s Fauteuil, a type of open-arm or elbow chair. In “Tante Renate,” the chair is called a “Lehnstuhl.” (170) “Die Literaten” become “die Schriftsteller” in “Tante Renate,” perhaps showing a tendency to move from more French-based expressions from the 1840s to German words in the 1860s. What is clear is that the revision process before the piece was republished was not a casual one.

One effect of the changes seems to be diminution of intensity from the first to the second version. For example, in “Modernes Märchen,” Bertha has a slight inkling that there is something strange about von Salm when she dances with him and feels through her gloves that his hands are ice cold, “eiskalt” (197) This cold is bone-chilling, “unheimlich fröstelnd.” In “Tante Renate,” Lewald leaves out “unheimlich fröstelnd” and changes “eiskalte” to merely “kalte Hande.” (174) When Bertha’s competitors jealously tease her that she must likewise be cold-blooded to attract an amphibian or fish like von

Salm, her reaction is “Mein Blut wurde dabei heiß.” (“Modernes Märchen” 197) In “Tante Renate”, however, her blood becomes not hot, but only “etwas heiß.” (175) One effect of such word choices may be to tone down the emotional level of the story. The character of Bertha may also seem more demure, more “weiblich” in her reactions.

Some changes and omission seem designed to make the fairy tale elements less uncanny. Here is a quotation from “Modernes Märchen,” then one from “Tante Renate” in order to illustrate this type of change.

[E]rinnerst Du Dich noch, liebe Bertha, des Abends, als Herr von Salm und Assessor Hecht bei uns eingeführt wurden? Ich vergesse das Entsetzen nicht, als ich sie in das Zimmer treten sah und in ihnen zwei Fische erblickend, an das Unglück dachte, das unserer Familie wieder erwachsen könne. Mit steigende Angst sah ich ihre Aufmerksamkeit und Deine vollkommene Arglosigkeit... (“Modernes Märchen” 202)

Erinnerst Du Dich noch, liebe Bertha, des Abends, als der Baron und der Assessor bei Deinen Eltern eingeführt wurden, und erinnerst Du Dich meiner Unterhaltung mit ihnen, so wirst Du auch verstehen, was ich damals sah, was ich dabei empfand, und wie ich bestrebt war, es den beiden Fremden begreiflich zu machen, daß ein Wesen in ihrer Nähe war, welches sie erkannte, welches sie bewachte und in Nothfalle berechtigt wäre, ihre böse Anschläge zu Schanden zu machen. „Ich sah mit Sorge ihre Aufmerksamkeit für Dich und Deine vollkommene Arglosigkeit...(“Tante Renate” 184)

In the original, the party takes place at Bertha's grandmother's house. Renate clearly recognizes the two men as fish and uses their fish surnames, von Salm and Hecht. Renate expresses horror and fear. The "Entsetzen" and "steigender Angst" of the original is revised to "Sorge," a big difference in connotation with the truly scary incident becoming downgraded to the worrisome. In "Tante Renate," there is no clear identification of the two men as fish, and Renate merely tries to communicate to the men that she is Bertha's concerned protector. Lewald also appears to introduce an error in the revision. Bertha first meets von Salm at a party at her grandparents' house in both the original and the revision, but Renate talks about the party as occurring at Bertha's parents' house in "Tante Renate." (184)

An example of another change that decreases the importance of clairvoyance to the story occurs by omission. In "Modernes Märchen," Renate makes an explanation of the insight that links Bertha to her as companions in suffering or "Leidensgefährten" because they were both born on Sunday. She goes on to say: "[e]in Sonntagskind ist hellsehend, wenn es eine unglückliche Liebe, reinen Herzens, ohne alle Bitterkeit überlebt hat." (198) This statement is omitted in "Tante Renate." By leaving out explicit reference to clairvoyance, it is less clear that Renate has magical powers. As a Sunday's child, her odd view of the relationship between mankind and the spirit world is downgraded from "Bizarrerie" ("Modernes Märchen" 198) to "Aberglauben" in "Tante Renate." (175-176) In another omission from "Tante Renate," there is no mention of *Undine* by Fouqué, "The Little Mermaid" by Andersen, nor the characters, Tomcat Murr and Hound Braganza, by E. T. A. Hoffman. Since Renate no longer cites these examples from fairy tales of animal/human transformation, the concept of the transmigration of

souls receives less support. While the original “Modernes Märchen” contains a number of fairy tale elements, it seems that Lewald retreated from as much use of fantasy and magic when she revised the story. “Tante Renate” features the title character as the good, but not so magical aunt in a somewhat more realistic tale. This study will now examine several of the more substantial changes in the revision.

Revisions that Lead to a Different Definition of Marriage

The basic exposition of the topic of the transmigration of souls remains in both versions of the tale, but it is altered somewhat in “Tante Renate.” The first mention of the topic occurs in “Modernes Märchen” during a conversation between Tante Renate and von Salm, Bertha’s suitor, when Renate states her belief that an animal’s soul can appear in the form of a human, but not vice versa.

„Sie betrachten die Seelenwanderung wie ein Märchen, Herr Baron,“ sagte endlich Renate, „aber ich habe doch meine eigenen Ansichten darüber. Auch ich bin weit davon entfernt, zu glauben, daß irgend ein galanter Kavalier oder eine schöne Prinzeß plötzlich in einen Löwen oder in ein Vögelchen verwandelt werde – wozu sollte das auch? – ob es aber nicht umgekehrt möglich sei, ob das nicht oft vorkomme, das weiß ich nicht.“ (“Modernes Märchen” 195)

A minor spelling change is that “Kavalier” in “Modernes Märchen” becomes “Cavalier” in “Tante Renate.” (“Tante Renate” 171) Other than such minor changes, both versions define transmigration as going in one direction: the soul of an animal enters a human form, but not vice versa. The reason given is that all development in the world is

progressive and upward. For the soul of a human to enter an animal would be regressive.
(“Modernes Märchen” 198 & “Tante Renate” 178)

Jahrhunderte lang hat man in dumpfer Ahnung dieser Wahrheiten geglaubt, daß die Seele des Menschen in ein Thiere gebannt werden könne; das ist aber ein Wahn. In der Welt ist Alles fortschreitend, darum darf Alles in aufsteigender Linie sich nur entwickeln; und darum ist es wahr, dass die Seele eines Thieres in Menschengestalt erscheinen könne, aber nicht umgekehrt. (Modernes Märchen 199)

In “Tante Renate,” however, Lewald enlarges this idea of upward linear progression to include also a concept of cycle or repetition as shown by the emphasis added in bold to the following quotation:

Jahrhunderte lang hat man in dunkler Ahnung dieser Wahrheiten geglaubt, daß die Seele des Menschen in die Thiere gebannt werden könne, das aber ist unmöglich, denn in der Welt ist Alles fortschreitend, Alles kann sich nur in aufsteigender Linie entwickeln, **bis es seinen Höhepunkt erreicht hat und wieder völlig aufgelöst wird in das All, um auf's Neue den Kreislauf des Lebens zu beginnen.** (“Tante Renate” 178)

The emphasized partial sentence, not in “Modernes Märchen,” adds the idea that after progress to a high point, there is dissolution and a repeating of the cycle of progression. Beginning with this insertion, Lewald makes other significant changes to the story as told in “Tante Renate” that develop the idea of what a good marriage is and is not.

Though both versions include Renate’s cautionary tale of how she frightened off her suitor, only “Tante Renate” more fully clarifies what the difficulty of a liaison

between a woman and a “Halbmensch” is. Lewald adds material explaining that a marriage is happiest when it is a union between a husband and wife of equal inclinations and capacities. To have fully developed human tendencies and qualities in both partners is important because then the partners can provide each other mutual support and happiness.

Finden sich im Erdenwallen nun harmonisch entwickelte Wesen zusammen, Geschöpfe, die auf gleicher Stufe ihrer Entwicklung stehen, so verschmelzen sie in gewissem Sinne in einander, fördern einander, und wir nennen das Glück. Kommen Geschöpfe von ungleicher Entwicklungsstufe zusammen, so hindern sie einander und wir nennen das Unglück. Das höchste Unglück aber ist es, wenn ein Geschöpf, das eben erst von seiner Thierbildung in die Menschengestalt übergetreten ist, und unter derselben noch die Eigenschaften und Neigungen seiner bisherigen Entwicklungsstufe beibehalten hat, in Liebe zu einem schuldlosen Mädchen aus einem alten Menschengeschlechte entbrennt... (“Tante Renate” 178)

Lewald, through Renate, informs young women considering marriage that marital unhappiness arises because “Halbmenschen” with their uncultivated instincts will hold back the fully human women they marry. In the happiest union, the two individuals are able to blend or fuse together and move forward and lift each other up. Though, Renate and Bertha are presented as young and inexperienced, they are at a fully human level with no trace of animal tendencies. They have been brought up to function as good wives, but that won’t happen if they marry “Halbmenschen.”

Marriage as a blending or fusing together is explored more fully in “Tante Renate” than was done in the original fairy tale. Campe uses the term “Zusammenschmelzen” to apply to a woman surrendering her existence in uniting with her husband in marriage. (140) Campe also refers to women as the weaker sex (19) and as the ivy clinging to the oak or stronger husband. (23) Lewald is able to make her case that men and women can better support each other in marriage if they blend or bond from equal stages of development. The inequality of a marriage between a “Halbmensch” and a woman at a higher level of cultivation than her husband is to be avoided.

A Happier Ending

One additional difference between “Modernes Märchen” and “Tante Renate” involves how each version concludes. Near the end of each story, Bertha awaits news on whether Tante Renate has been successful in getting rid of her half-human suitor, von Salm. In the original version, Renate returns to Bertha after lunch with von Salm and Hecht to report that the men have left town, fearing that Renate had perceived that they really were fish.

Und so geschah es. Am nächsten Morgen erhielten wir ihre Abschiedskarten, deren p. p. c. mir heiße Tränen erpreßte. Mir war so öde zu Muthe, und dann schwindelte mir wieder, wie Jemand, den man von jähem Abgrund zurückgerissen und den, beim Andenken an die Gefahr, immer wieder der Schwindel erfaßt. Es waren häßliche Tage! (“Modernes Märchen 203)

Giving von Salm up wasn't easy, but Renate arranges a spa trip to allow Bertha to forget and heal, and the story wraps up with Bertha meeting and marrying a man approved by Renate. Bertha narrates:

Als ich nach meiner Rückkehr die Bekanntschaft meines jetzigen Mannes machte, and dem ich einen wahren, ganzen und wunderprächtigen Menschen besitze und den selbst Tante Renate vollkommen und herrlich findet, da trat die Vergangenheit so ganz in den Hintergrund, daß mir selbst die Episode vom Assessor Hecht und vom Baron Salm oft wie ein Traum oder wie ein Märchen erscheint, obgleich noch nicht drei Jahre nach diesem Abenteuer vergangen sind.
(204)

The voice of Bertha that begins and ends "Modernes Märchen" is that of an eighteen-year old looking back to when she was fifteen and first began attending parties as a young woman eligible to be courted. Lewald was unmarried, just entering her thirties and living at home as she created the characters of the married Bertha and the unmarried Renate. The happy ending to "Modernes Märchen" affirms marriage to "an honest, complete and wonderful person" as Shawn and Blackwell translate the passage in "A Modern Fairy Tale 1841." (194)

There is no further mention of Renate in "Modernes Märchen" as Bertha looks back from a vantage point three years after her encounter with von Salm and Hecht considering her memory to be like a dream or fairy tale. For the ending, Lewald leaves the impression that Renate continues living with her parents and experiencing the bitter life of an outsider and "alte Jungfer." The now married eighteen year old Bertha wraps up the tale in a voice of self-centered satisfaction.

In “Tante Renate,” Lewald inserts a further episode that reveals more of Bertha’s character. Bertha, while waiting for Renate to come back from the luncheon, falls into a dreamlike trance.

Ich stand am Fenster und sah die Menschen vorübergehen und dachte: Seid Ihr denn Menschen? Ich dachte an meine jungen Freunde und Freundinnen, und fragte mich: was liebst Du denn an ihnen? Und wie ich irre geworden war an Allem um mich her, so wurde ich auch irre an mir selbst. Ich kam mir freilich wie gerettet vor, aber ich war fröhlicher gewesen, als ich mich noch unbefangen keiner Rettung bedürftig geglaubt hatte, und mir lagen beständig die Worte im Sinn: denn das Wissen ist der Tod! (“Tante Renate”186)

Thus the shock of Renate’s revelations and the wait seem to have precipitated in Bertha an intense kind of self-questioning. Though Bertha does not see the people walking by her window as “Halbmenschen,” she wonders whether they are fully human. Bertha asks herself what she loves about her friends and whether she has misperceived things about herself and others. She would have been happier if no rescue was needed. And she is obsessed with the phrase: Knowledge is death! In contrast to “Modernes Märchen” in which Renate learns from a spell book that too much knowledge causes a headache, Bertha has the more depressing thought that knowledge is death while she awaits her rescue.

In “Tante Renate,” Lewald portrays Bertha as not trusting her own judgment of friends and with being very unhappy with her new knowledge. Renate’s role is enlarged from “Modernes Märchen” in that she offers words of encouragement after the rescue to

help Bertha overcome feelings of self-doubt and grief at the loss of a suitor. Renate's words of encouragement that love is an antidote include:

...die Liebe ist das Leben. Daran halte Dich, mein Kind. Die Liebe wird Dich erlösen, denn sie ist allmächtig und kann Alles—selbst böse Erinnerungen vergessen machen. ("Tante Renate" 187)

Thus Lewald has Renate bond with and support her niece by making a very strong statement about love as life, as salvation, as all-powerful and as able to overcome evil memories.

When Lewald republished the "Modernes Märchen" as "Tante Renate," she was about the age of Renate. Though she ends "Tante Renate" with Bertha still the narrator, Bertha is no longer a teenager, and a number of years have passed since Bertha was courted at fifteen and married at sixteen. Bertha looks back over the episode of ending the courtship and the subsequent marriage:

als ich ein Jahr nach meiner Rückkehr die Bekanntschaft meines Mannes machte, an dem ich einen wahren und vortrefflichen Menschen besitze, und an dem selbst Tante Renate keinen Makel findet, da trat die Vergangenheit für mich so völlig in den Hintergrund, daß mir selbst die Begegnung mit dem Baron jetzt beinahe wie ein Traum oder wie ein Märchen erscheint. ("Tante Renate" 188)

Just before this happy ending, Lewald includes Bertha's remark that "die Tante war und blieb damals und durch manche Jahre meine Helferin und meine Stütze." (187) The additional passage of time between the Bertha's marriage and her telling of the tale allows Lewald to paint a more positive picture of the role that the still unmarried Renate assumes in Bertha's life.

Summary

Both “Modernes Märchen” and “Tante Renate” affirm that marriage is a goal for a young woman much in line with Campe’s view that marriage is a woman’s destiny. Both examine the problems that a young woman might encounter in the courtship process to achieve the happy ending of finding a husband. Neither story questions Campe’s advice that an innocent and virtuous woman, with the help of her family and friends, should present herself in such a way as to attract an eligible suitor. In the courtship process that Lewald describes, a man, to be an eligible suitor, should be attractive in appearance, well-mannered, aware of what is socially correct and in a respected profession that allows him to provide social standing and financial support to his family. Lewald highlights in both stories that the usual courtship process and marriage is likely to unite two people who are almost strangers since external characteristics are the chief attractions that lead to courtship. However, it is possible for an insightful woman such as Renate to help an inexperienced younger woman to avoid an unhappy marriage to a man of bad character.

In both stories, the bitterness that Renate has experienced by never marrying is not downplayed. However, Lewald is able to present the idea that the role of Renate as a helpful aunt to the other women in the family is valuable and has its rewards. The idea that it is important for a young woman not only to rely on parents for advice, but rather to seek input on the suitability of a marriage partner from others with less than a vested interest in marrying off a daughter also comes through clearly in both stories. In “Tante Renate,” the bonding and continued friendship between Bertha and Renate are only briefly described, but this bonding leads to a more positive presentation of what is

possible for an older unmarried woman. By putting a greater emphasis on Renate in the revision, Lewald lets Renate expand on the benefits of careful partner selection. In Renate's exposition on marriage, she emphasizes the importance of selecting a husband who supports rather than hinders his younger wife as she develops.

Both stories gently challenge Campe's idea that a woman must marry to achieve her destiny. Lewald raises questions about courtship conventions and the emphasis on external qualities that lead to a marriage proposal. The stories come across as an entertaining way of asking the readers to think about the pressures and restrictions placed on young women in Lewald's era.

Conclusion

This thesis project on Fanny Lewald began some years ago with a class assignment to read from a collection of excerpts from works by women authors writing in German during the first half of the nineteenth century. Included in the selections were short portions taken from Lewald's autobiography, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*. As I went on to read about Lewald and some of the women writers contemporary to her, several things stood out. First, in many years of studying German literature, I had not encountered work by these women authors and did not recognize their names. Second, in the present day there is continued discussion of some of the topics about which the women wrote such as equal rights and opportunities for women. As I continued to read and research with a focus on what Lewald has written and what others have written about her, I learned that with the two hundredth celebration of her birth in 1811, she is widely acknowledged as one of the most important women authors of the nineteenth century in Germany. She is also heralded for her advocacy for equal rights for women and Jews. However, she and her contemporaries still do not have much name recognition in the general public. What Lewald and women of her time wrote went out of print, and they were largely forgotten or received scant attention in literary histories after their lifetimes. Beginning in the 1970s, however, there has been much scholarly effort devoted to discovering and reprinting works of these forgotten nineteenth century women authors. During the course of this thesis project, the amount and availability of both original material and literary criticism has increased, and new material continues to be published. Much of what Lewald has written can now be read in reprint, in digital form or in

archival original print form. Her name recognition will likely increase, but even so, the birthday remembrances of 2011 take care to answer the question, “Who was Fanny Lewald?”

One of the main things that stood out to me as I came to learn more about Lewald and the time in which she lived and wrote was the influential nature of her autobiography, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*. Published when she was fifty years old, married and an established author, the autobiography covers the first thirty years of her life from her birth in Königsberg in 1811 to her arrival in Italy in 1846 on a trip financed by earnings from her first three novels. Her autobiography, detailing growing up female in a middle class Jewish family in Prussia, is often referenced for its details on such topics as nineteenth century family life, schooling for girls and gender roles, especially in marriage. For example, in the volume entitled *German Women in the Nineteenth Century: A Social History* edited by John Fout, three different chapters deal with women’s reading habits in the period before 1843, women writers during the 1848 revolution and growing up female in nineteenth century Germany. These three chapters specifically reference Lewald and her autobiography.

Meine Lebensgeschichte was of particular use to this thesis project for its narrative of how Lewald turned to writing as a means of self-emancipation from the restrictions of gender roles for women in nineteenth century Germany. My chief reference was Joachim Heinrich Campe’s book of advice on how to prepare young women to assume the roles of Gattin, Mutter and Hausfrau. Campe puts forth the idea that it was a woman’s destiny and fulfillment to marry. In her autobiography, Lewald is particularly open about suffering from two failed romances and having to take a stand

against a marriage of convenience proposed by her father. Writing was her way of breaking out when it seemed likely that she would remain unmarried and in need of a way to support herself. Lewald presents the 1841 publication of her first piece of fiction, a fairy tale called “Modernes Märchen,” as the beginning of her emancipation from the restricted social role available to women. Her first novel, *Clementine*, published in 1843, explores the consequences of a marriage of convenience for a woman who gives in to social pressure and marries an older man in spite of loving someone else. In 1843, Lewald began publishing essays voicing emancipatory ideas such as improved education and opportunities for employment for women. She continued to advocate for women’s rights until near the end of her life in 1889. Her autobiography, written in 1861/2, contains numerous comments that also speak to women’s emancipation. I found that Lewald’s reputation as a “Bahnbrecherin” and as a “Vorkämpferin des Frauenemanzipation” is well-supported by her writings over the course of her long career.

A second focus of my line of inquiry in this project was based on the discovery that there existed two versions of Lewald’s first piece of fiction, one published in 1841 and one revised and published in 1862. Since there were differences in the two stories, I chose to compare the two versions to see what changes and what remained the same. Neither story questions Campe’s view that marriage is a way for a woman to find fulfillment. Both stories feature marriage as a happy ending for a young woman who finds a good husband. However, Lewald devised a story line that took issue with the courtship process by showing the self-doubt and vulnerability of a “zukünftige Ehefrau.” There was danger in marrying a man of bad character. When Lewald revised “Modernes

Mährchen” and renamed it “Tante Renate” in 1862, she enlarged on the idea of marriage and what contributes to a happy marriage. Lewald’s expanded conception of marriage includes the condition that the husband should have a good character and also a level of cultural development equal to that of his wife so that they can help and support each other. Otherwise, a husband with a deficient character and at a level inferior to his wife will hinder her and cause unhappiness or worse. The 1862 revision also presents a more positive view of women who do not marry by showing that an “alte Jungfer” can have a mentoring didactic role. In so doing, she bonds and finds friendship with young women. With the original and revised stories, Lewald published entertaining writing while questioning courtship and the suitability of husbands found in the process.

This thesis project compares “Modernes Mährchen” and “Tante Renate.” I also examined Lewald’s first novel, *Clementine*, and the changes made when Lewald revised it thirty years later. In this longer work, there is even more changes from original to revision. For example, she omitted references to pre-1840 political sentiments and updated some of the dialog among main characters to be better in line with Berlin in the 1870s when producing the second version of *Clementine*. Lewald matured as a writer across overlapping literary time periods of Romanticism, Biedermeier, Vormärz and Realism. She strove to reflect up-to-date language, respect for the institution of marriage, empathy for unmarried women and awareness of the suffering produced by lack of women’s rights and opportunities across her long career. And she revised her work. I learned that commentators on Lewald’s work have made errors when they failed to recognize that revisions had taken place or when they worked from incomplete editions of her work. The most recent efforts by Schneider and Sternagel to annotate and publish

Lewald's voluminous correspondence should prove to be valuable for continuing scholarship on Lewald. As more material from Lewald's era becomes available, it will be important to up-date and revise some of the discussions of her work.

As I bring this thesis project to a close, I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to engage with Fanny Lewald, her autobiography, her early fiction and her perspective on the era in which she lived. In the process, I was impressed by the numerous ways Lewald used the opportunities available to her, though at first they seemed few to me. Though she traveled by horse-drawn coach in her first travels in 1832 to Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Weimar and Baden-Baden, she connected with her extended family and Junges Deutschland enthusiasts. In 1833, she stayed with relatives in Breslau sympathetic to Jewish emancipation. In living with relatives in Berlin 1839, she received mentoring in social skills and encouragement to be more independent by Sophie Bloch, a distant relative of her father. The ways in which August Lewald, and her brother, Otto, helped her in the 1840s to get started on her career have already been discussed. Lewald got to know Otilie Assing (1819-1884), her first cousin and Karl August Varnhagen's niece, before Otilie moved to the U.S. in 1852. Learning of Otilie Assing and her relationship to Fredrick Douglass helped me realize that Lewald was very aware of the American Civil War and issues related to emancipation in the American context. Travel and communication became easier in Lewald's lifetime and she connected with people all over Europe and the British Isles to stay abreast of political, social and literary issues.

As I finish this thesis project, articles appear regularly in the media on the wage gap between men and women, the "glass ceiling," and treatment of pregnant women in

the work force. Regarding views of the importance of marriage for a woman, I found the following quote from Elif Batuman in the Cultural Comment section of *The New Yorker* from March 30, 2015:

If no longer vital to a woman's status as a human being, marriage is still understood as her crowning success, the event without which her life won't be truly complete.

Batuman, a staff writer for the magazine, made the comment in a review of the 2012 best selling book *Gone Girl* and 2014 movie made from it. She titled the article, "Marriage as an Abduction." When Fanny Lewald chose to explore courtship and marriage from a woman's point of view for her first fictional works in the 1840s and then revised them in the 60s and 70s, she raised issues that are still being explored today.

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Vita

Judith Harle Hector was the first-born child of Siegfried and Frances Harle. She spent her childhood on the family farm near Newberg, Oregon and recalls many happy hours playing with her younger brothers and sister, David, Charles and Nancy. She attended a nearby two-room country school for 8 years before entering Newberg High School. After receiving both B. S. and B. A. degrees in 1965 from Oregon State University with a major of General Science and a minor in German, she joined the Peace Corps to teach mathematics at a secondary school in Kumasi, Ghana. After two years, she returned to the United States to work on a M. A. T. degree in mathematics at Michigan State University. In 1969, she married Mark Hector, a fellow returned Peace Corps volunteer, whom she had met in Ghana. Upon completion of her degree in 1969, she taught mathematics at East Lansing High School for 4 years before moving to Knoxville, Tennessee for her husband's job. From 1973 to 2008, Judith taught mathematics and served in various administrative capacities including Dean of Mathematics at Walters State Community College in Morristown, Tennessee. During these 35 years, she and her husband adopted and raised two daughters, Wendy and Shannon and took them to Ile-Ife, Nigeria for a year where the parents taught at the university and the daughters attended school. Judith also completed an Ed. D. degree in Curriculum and Instruction (Mathematics Education) at University of Tennessee in 1978. After graduating from the Master of Arts Program in German at the University of Tennessee in Spring 2014, Judith plans to continue with her professional interests in

mathematics teaching and German on a part-time basis while enjoying family life and travel with her husband, daughters, son-in-law, and three grandchildren.