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Introduction: Romantic Aesthetics and Freedom

A Note on Gender with Reference to Dorothea Schlegel's *Florentin*

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When I agreed to serve as guest editor for this volume 5 of *Symphilosophie*, I decided to follow a passion of mine, and that is exploring the philosophical relation between the artist and the exercise of freedom through their creation of works. This is an issue that pairs well with the original approaches to aesthetic form in Romanticism (the fragment, irony, the genre of the letter, and the custom of letter-reading as an uptake from *Empfindsamkeit* and *Aufklärung*, but with its own twist[1]), a topic which influenced theories of aesthetic expression and art as a symbolic form in the twentieth century. The realization of freedom through art can also be seen as a way of *emancipation* – as one part of the quest by outsiders, e.g. women intellectuals, to participate in current discussions, developing a voice of their own that could change, in turn, the public perception of them as active participants in philosophical discussions.

Instead of boring the reader with mere repetitions and summaries of the wonderful contributions to this volume, I will, in section 1, reference key points of these papers to show their import on how art can be seen as a realization of freedom, and, in section 2, connect them to one instance of an attempted combination of artistry and freedom as an act of emancipation. Since I think that these phenomena are best approached from the sidelines, I will limit myself to an almost failed attempt at artistic realization of freedom through an androgynous character: Florentin from Dorothea Schlegel's novel

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[1] Elsewhere I put forward the argument that Bettina von Arnim's work from the 1830s is also an apt representation of early romantic writing, see Pollok 2024, 145.

of the same name. I hope that my notes can serve to elucidate the philosophical underpinnings of what **Barbara Becker-Cantarino** discusses in her contribution, and can thus be seen as another instance of *Symphilosophie*.

1. Freedom through Art

Let us start from a notion of freedom in the tradition of the Enlightenment as a balance between sensibility and reason. Romanticism should not be understood as a straightforward counter-movement against Enlightenment or Rationalism, as it continues to strive for a unification of sensibility and reason. As Friedrich Hölderlin exclaims: "We cannot deny the drive to free ourselves, to ennoble ourselves, to progress into the infinite. That would be animalistic. But we can also not deny the drive to be determined, to be receptive; that would not be human." (Hölderlin, *Hyperion*, HSA 3:194) The middle position between the animalistic and the angelical: humanity, still needed a better framework. And this is also the main interest of an author who is mainly connected to German Classicism, but whose aesthetic works emerged in the 1790s during his time as a professor of history in Jena, *the* place of Early German Romanticism: Friedrich Schiller. His aesthetic battles with Kant are grounded in his early involvement in the search for a mediating power between mind and body, inspired by the "philosophical doctors"[2], and are decisively heightened by the new "philosophy of the subject" by Karl Leonhard Reinhold and, most prominently, Johann Gottlieb Fichte. One of Schiller's main interests, the aesthetic play that enables the realization of the whole human being, had an impact on the Romantics as well. For this volume, **Caecilie Varslev-Pedersen** discusses his take on artistic creation as a necessary step away from the violence of modern (fragmented, abstracting) reason to enable freedom through aesthetic semblance and play. Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis chose a similar route in their take on the relation between art and philosophy, as **Robert König** argues. The full breadth of our experience must not be fixed by rational or concept-based systems but can only "shine through" in the artistic formulation of it. It is noteworthy that this undertaking is essentially intersubjective (as König argues in part 5 of his essay).

[2] "Vernünftige Ärzte", see on this in particular Wolfgang Riedel's study from 1785, but also a more recent article in the *Palgrave Handbook on the Philosophy of Friedrich Schiller*. Schiller's own anthropological interest is keenly reflected in two of his medical dissertations, the *Philosophy of Physiology* from 1779, and the *Essay on the Connection of the Animal and Spiritual Nature of Humanity* from 1780.

Romantic philosophers sought to establish the foundations for humanity in all its intricacies, in its connection of reason and sensibility, its reliance on free imagination, its fragile intersubjective constructions in politics. Freedom, then, is always understood as *human* freedom – a mode of being that is neither ignorant of nor unfettered by restrictions and binding forces, but that deals with them consciously as a means to beautiful form, a mode in which we are being bound and still autonomous. Schiller's notion of aesthetic play, in which we are fulfilling the demands of our sensible as well as intelligible aspects without letting one take over and consume the other, gives shape to this idea. For the Romantics, the expression and realization of freedom thus happens most decisively through romantic *form*.

The peculiarity of romantic form might have its roots in one central article of enlightened faith: the concept of perfection. The Romantics do not dismiss this notion, but argue that a connection is possible between beauty, truth, and goodness (as Hegel made part and parcel of his system, see the paper by **Francesco Campana**). But its predominant form in our human world is that of longing, of lack, of desire. Romanticism is like the *daimon* Eros, mitigating and conversing between the mundane and the ideal world; an Eros that is fully aware of being lacking in several ways, but also being gifted with the only capacity to make up for this lack: their imagination, the desire for unity made manifest.

The form of romantic irony, the fragment, or romantic poetry reflects this dynamic structure. Through art, we make reason transcend itself in an infinite act of reflection, both of itself and its object; and in this back and forth, in this space in-between, we find something "higher" (F. Schlegel, *Athenaeum Fragment* #116), we find who we truly are. Irony is then the balance "between self-creation and self-destruction" (F.S., *Critical Fragment* #28) – it constructs a world but is also skeptical about the capacity of representing anything to the fullest. Perspective is crucial, as it alone can instantiate character – but it also always endangers an apt representation of the whole. **Karolin Mirzakhan** likens this search in its dynamic structure to a "conversation" (see Mirzakhan 2020, 257), and treats us in this volume to an in-depth discussion of romantic irony and its relation to the *Vocation of Man* in Friedrich Schlegel's fragments and his essay aptly entitled "On Incomprehensibility". Ultimately, romantic form becomes a reflection on freedom: the dream of a successful integration of the individual in the whole without losing sight of itself. The artist as genius strives towards this expression with the full knowledge that we will never finally reach its fruition, but that we have to keep trying.

Incidentally, the starting point of our striving is also more akin to a *task* than an immediate given. To give form to our expression, we need to give form to ourselves, we must establish ourselves as autonomous agents. Most romantic authors double as representatives of German idealism, which predominantly occupies itself with developing a notion of a self not just as an empirical being, but the fundamental, self-positing starting-point (and sometimes also end-point) of a philosophical system. Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre* as a "Grundlegung" of Kant's fundamental principle of the synthetic unity of the apperception, but also Hegel's system of the absolute, even Schelling's theory of myth, all aim to show how the self comes to be what it is and do the work that it does – or even: the work that it should do. In his *Fichte Studies* Novalis takes the self-constitution as a subject to be reliant on symbolic representation; with this, he showcases a keen sense for the artistic potential of the original *Thathandlung*. Constituting oneself as a subject, as a central perspective without which there would be no content, no substance to the world, cannot work without representation, a first and fundamental "standing in" of an image for a barely intelligible notion – the moment the "I" posits itself *as* an "I", the utterance of identity, so Novalis, already presupposes something that is indeed *not* identical with its very expression or statement. The "I" cannot even be itself without representing itself, and without already relating to the world (see Mitchell 2020, 146).

This means that by the very act of self-representation, we initiate the fundamental divide between what is me and what represents me (apart from the even further "what is not me", the "Nicht-Ich" in the strict sense). Within the very process of self-instantiation and then subsequently self-realization we see a form of "standing in for", "symbolizing x"; an artistic means of reference. And this fundamental role of reference is reflected in the crucial place that artistic expression of oneself and one's life takes on in many idealistic and romantic theories, and occupies many a discussion about various artistic genres (such as music, as **Christoph Haffter** discusses in his contribution). With **Jane Kneller's** reading of Novalis, we even could go as far as argue that every citizen ought to be an artist, so that we can realize an ideal democracy that expresses and safeguards the freedom of its citizens. To "romanticize" ourselves in this way, we do not hide in the clouds of mere imagination, but we oscillate between the realm of imagination and reality, as the later works of Bettina Brentano-von Arnim illustrate quite delightfully. Another author who thought about this relationship is Karl Philipp Moritz (see **Allen Speight's** discussion). Of particular interest for him is the structure of artistic imitation, which can never mean any act of representing something without the artist themselves not being changed within the very

act of artistic formation. To realize art, then, becomes tantamount to realizing oneself through an act of commitment.

This could also mean that we must have the freedom to turn our lives into art. And this artistic reimagining of our personalities and our lives comes at a cost. By romanticizing, we might enable the flight of imagination, we might infuse reality with the transcendent; but we also need to develop a new form of mutual honesty.

Let me explain this with a contemporary sideline: In the 2023 series *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, the heroine Midge Maisel loses her husband, with whom she just reconnected, again when he witnesses her stand-up routine, in which she is making fun of their relationship. The first separation between the protagonists sets the series in motion: the husband, Joel Maisel, seeks to realize himself as a comedian; he isn't as good with jokes, but at least he can break with traditional expectations by starting an affair, and by dumping his unsuspecting housewife, the aforementioned Midge. She, caught up in all her traditional role-expectations, is devastated and has to reinvent herself: incidentally, she does so as a comedian, and a far better one than her former husband. But still, over the course of the season, the former couple reconnects – until, see above, the husband witnesses Midge's stand-up routine. "I cannot live as a joke", he cries. And, to be honest, I can relate. Using a relationship to craft ruthless jokes might work for your audience, but it also does something to the relationship: it devalues it. You belittle the other person when you are the one making the jokes and getting the laughs for it. We can, of course, also understand Midge – she finally lives her dream, after having learned the hard way that being the perfect housewife is not really cutting it. She obviously could not trust her husband to love her forever, but instead she needs to create something by herself that helps her realize her dreams. She reinvents herself, and with this, also develops a new way to look at her surroundings (including her unfortunate former husband). This is her own creation in crucial regards (of course, she cannot fully control the level of her success, but even there she can make very informed guesses). And so, she turns life into art – which heightens her art, but also has the aforementioned fatal impact on her real life: the reunion with the former husband does not happen.

Is this a hidden death sentence for the romantic requirement of romanticizing our lives? I do not think so, even though it helps to cast a realistic light on its dangers.

First of all, Joel Maisel's feeling of betrayal is two-sided: on the one hand he is dumbfounded that his life and his mistakes are fodder for a foreign audience. On the other, he has to admit that his former wife is in fact much

better than him, and *that* is (at least according to the design of this scene) the final and decisive straw. By trying to realize his dreams, he actually helped her realize hers.[3] His indignation that his life was turned into art is not the sole factor of his decision to turn away from his old life for good.

But what about Mrs. Maisel turning life into art? What could be seen as a violation of privacy and a devaluation of another person (even if this person made stupid mistakes), is, under Romantic lights as practiced by the likes of Friedrich and Dorothea Schlegel, rather a claim to artistic self-realization. This works best if both parties are in on the game, and with this, we leave the 21st century and come back to the dawn of the 19th. Friedrich's *Lucinde* (1799) contains details that could be (and were) read as reference to the real life of these two lovers turned married couple; it is tempting to read Dorothea's *Florentin* (1801) in the same vein.

However, there is this fact that these two authors shared many a thing, but not their gender, and therefore, do not enjoy the same social standing. Whereas the publication for Friedrich Schlegel could indeed be seen as an act of self-expression, issues were more complex for Dorothea Schlegel's work. **Barbara Becker-Cantarino**'s essay brings us more insight into the relationship between Schlegel and Friedrich Schleiermacher. I will, therefore, be relatively short about those aspects and concentrate on Dorothea Schlegel's aesthetic expression of freedom (or its lack) in her *Florentin* (1801). This offers a new facet to Becker-Cantarino's discussion (see there sections 6 and 7), or so I hope.

2. An expression of artistic freedom – but where did freedom go?

Born Brendel Mendelssohn in 1764, around the year 1794 Moses Mendelssohn's second child began to use Dorothea as her first name, perhaps to sound more gentile.[4] In 1783 she is married off to Simon Veit, a friend of Mendelssohn's and a participant in the famous *Morning Hours*. Unfortunately, Simon Veit's intellectual talents were not as deep as this participation would suggest. As her letters attest, Dorothea felt deeply alone in the marriage. In 1797 she met Friedrich Schlegel at her friend Henriette Herz' salon – and the rest is famous lore of any historical account on Early German Romanticism: she divorces Veit in 1799, marries Schlegel in 1804, the same year that she also – though the divorce document forbade this as well as the marriage – converts to Protestantism. With the divorce, she loses

[3] Spoiler alert: turns out her former husband is really good at accepting his losses and comes to accept his fate over the course of the subsequent seasons. But this is beside the point here.
[4] See Stern 2004, 70.

custody of her older son, and with the marriage and conversion, of her younger surviving son as well. It is worth noting that Henriette Herz and Friedrich Schleiermacher are the most ardent defenders of her unusual step.[5] In 1808 she converts to Catholicism. Dorothea Schlegel dies 1839 in Frankfurt am Main, in the household of her younger son Philipp.

In her unhappy marriage and later under Schlegel's demanding personality, but also born out of the *Tugendbund* that she created in her earlier years in Berlin with her friends (among them Henriette Herz and Wilhelm von Humboldt[6]), Dorothea Veit slowly gains (or, concerning the former factors, is forced into) a new self-image that demanded a change in her life. It is noteworthy that it is Schleiermacher who is with her at the time of her deepest (psychological and physiological) crisis in the early summer of 1798. While her boyfriend is frolicking about in Dresden together with his brother and his sister-in-law Caroline,[7] Dorothea Veit stays at home, ill and confused. She knows that she has to come to a decision about her unhappy marriage to Simon Veit. Schleiermacher, as instructed by Friedrich, stays with her and helps her to reflect on her situation, as she acknowledges five years later.[8] We can safely assume that Schleiermacher did not talk her into remaining in her marriage, since, as he argues, only a marriage bound in love is a true union,[9] and must not become the "grave of freedom and of true life"[10] for either side. In a true union, both parties' personalities should benefit and be thus heightened: the man "gains clarity of character; the woman self-assurance [*Selbstbewusstsein*],[11] extension [*Ausdehnung*], development of all spiritual seeds [*geistige Keime*], gets in touch with the whole world."[12]

Relieved, Dorothea parts from Simon – and step by step, from many aspects of her former self. In 1799, she can finally say: "I have acted

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[5] See Wilhelmy 2000, 75: A marriage without love is morally inferior to a "love without marriage".

[6] See Pollok 2020 and 2021.

[7] The ever-fascinating Caroline Michaelis married August Wilhelm Schlegel in 1796, and became Caroline Schelling in 1803. It is safe to say that in 1798 Friedrich was still quite infatuated with her as well, an endless source of insecurity for Dorothea, see Stern 2004, 90.

[8] As she writes, he eased her anxiety about her future – she had already decided on the divorce but kept feeling the existential weight of this decision. Schleiermacher helped her not merely to endure this, but rather to take action herself (see her letter from 10/28/1799, Landsberg ed., 283–4).

[9] See Daub 2012 about the metaphysical dimensions of marriage for Schleiermacher and Schlegel; Dorothea Schlegel's letter to Brinckmann from 2. February, 1799, Landsberg ed., 276, and Stern 2004. 94–95.

[10] Cit. Stern 2004, 95.

[11] *Selbstbewusstsein* contains the dimension of self-assurance and self-consciousness, but in the present case the former seems prevalent.

[12] Cit. Stern 2004, 95.

according to my convictions; that I haven't done so thus far is unforgivable, I can only offer as my defense that I have not really known my rights before, that the friends whom I told about my situation did not agree with me, so that I feared that I would have to stay all by myself."[13]

Schleiermacher mentions Friedrich's preference for everything that is "great" (*groß*), "fiery" (*feurig*) and "strong" (*stark*),[14] unerringly characterizing Dorothea with these terms as well. Matters are more complicated, though. Dorothea Schlegel combines in a rather stunning way a number of differences, contradictions even, in one person. She is highly intelligent, has a keen sense for literary quality – but can also be very judgmental and tends to stick to her judgment quite stubbornly. And despite her quest of freeing herself from her first marriage, she all too happily returns to marital dependence, more true to herself intellectually, but far less accepted socially. In short, the new position she gains might put her in a more liberal and inspiring intellectual environment, but it also isolated her and put a lot of weight on her shoulders; a weight that she does not always seem willing to take.

Her inner 'greatness' and energy allowed her to master a plethora of challenging roles: both Dorothea Schlegel and her sister-in-law Caroline Schlegel work as their respective husband's secretaries; they copy their writings, translate texts for them, support their work as editors, do the proof-reading, while also holding up the household, taking care of the children, etc. Friedrich Schlegel's life as a free author (he was apparently unfit for any other job) took its toll on Dorothea; Schleiermacher describes it as a continual fear of shipwreck[15] that she could endure solely because of her inner strength and energy (and a good deal of devotion to boot).

Despite this display of inner strength, there are two reasons Dorothea Schlegel's life does not lend itself to being a perfect exemplar of a female way of realizing freedom. On the personal level, there is her willingness to lose herself in her adoration for her new husband; Becker-Cantarino (see section V) cites various letters in this regard, whose level of willingness for self-sacrifice might be abhorrent to a fair number of modern feminists (myself included). This somewhat also spread into her life as a writer, as Schlegel mostly kept denying her authorship. After *Florentin* appeared anonymously in

[13] "…ich habe nach meiner Überzeugung gehandelt; daß ich es bis jetzt noch nicht getan habe, ist unverzeihlich von mir, zu meiner Verteidigung kann ich nur das einzige anführen, daß ich bis jetzt meine Rechte eigentlich gar nicht kannte, die Freunde, denen ich mich entdeckte, nicht meiner Meinung waren, so daß ich fürchtete ganz allein stehen zu müssen" (to Gustav von Brinkmann, 2. Feb 1799, Landsberg ed., 277).
[14] Letter to his sister, 31. December 1797, Landsberg ed., 25–59.
[15] In a letter to Charlotte, 23. March 1799, Landsberg ed., 310.

1801, she published (either anonymously or under pseudonyms) a few translations[16] and a few original pieces in Friedrich Schlegel's journal *Europa*. But apart from that, she "undertook no more independent writing from 1807 until her death in 1839."[17]

A quick look at *Florentin* and its stance towards gender is also unsatisfactory, at least under a straightforward reading. This fragment of a novel[18] portrays an 'artist of life' marked by an inner restlessness that is reminiscent of the protagonist in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1795–96).[19] But instead of the bourgeois Wilhelm, Schlegel chooses a rather obscure character with a supposedly dark past and even more mysterious connections to his surroundings, including hints at an unhappy love affair (maybe even two). Instead of a female counterpart to Friedrich's *Lucinde*, Dorothea Schlegel tries out a type of hero who is hard to pin down, whether in terms of sexuality or in term of his past (and future). The leading motifs of the novel can be portrayed as three pairs that each showcase a particular source of tension: freedom vs. longing, love vs. responsibility, and identity vs. role-expectations. If read with a bit more ironic outlook[20], Schlegel's judgment concerning then current reading and gender expectations emerges more clearly: only if we understand the flower Florentin as the counterfoil to the mimetic (i.e. traditional, non-romantic?) Wilhelm and the phallic "Turm-gesellschaft" can we digest the (mis)representation of gender in this novel as a form of critique.

Freedom and longing: In the novel, Schlegel paints Florentin as the counterfoil to several characters. There is his sister, a compliant girl who submits herself to the authority of the church. Even when her brother jumps in to rescue her, she prefers to do what she is told, and not even tries to take her situation into her own hands. In contrast to this (and underscored by Florentin's failed attempt to 'rescue' his sister), Florentin does not stick to any rules but his own. His constant wandering from place to place is also depicted as a motion of apparent freedom that, however, only gains its true

[16] It remains a subject of discussion how many of the translations her husband actually authored, see Stern 2004.
[17] Becker-Cantarino 1995, 93; see also the overall negative judgment by Eicher 1997, 11 and 18.
[18] The title page promises to be the first volume; however, a sequel never materialized – this could partly be blamed on Dorothea's reluctance to keep up with Florentin's anti-Catholic rants after she herself had chosen this faith, but it seems more likely that the obscure ending was satisfying enough even to the earlier Dorothea to keep this novel in its fragmentary state.
[19] See Becker-Cantarino 2000, 139-41. She stresses in particular Schlegel's implicit critique of the narration of masculinity in Goethe's novel.
[20] Becker-Cantarino (2000, 135) calls the novel a parody; and it seems that this reading is the only way to avoid disappointment.

worth when it acquires a direction: first he just flees from his previous life, but then he decides to spend his time with his new friends, at the court of the Count of Schwarzenberg, at whose estate Florentin stays for the majority of the novel's narrated time. Or, towards the end of the novel, Florentin decides to stop being the plus-one and plans to go to the nearby city to meet with Clementine, Schwarzenberg's sister. It remains unclear what kind of relationship he might have had with her previously, but Schlegel lets her faint once she sees Florentin. With even this riddle remaining unsolved throughout the second part of the novel, the reader follows Florentin on his route to meet a few more acquaintances, but rather abruptly the novel ends after a duel between him and the fiancée of one of these acquaintances. Florentin just disappears, as if he has become one with the surrounding forest.[21]

As free as Florentin seems to be, there is an undertone of incompleteness, striving, and longing in his actions; they are in that way truly erotic in that they are born out of a lack. His ultimate disappearance destroys any hope for closure, or for a keener sense of direction. To the reader, this does not appear as an act of freedom (in search to compensate for the lack), but rather leaves them in confusion.

Love and responsibility: Instead of taking responsibility by understanding love as a commitment, the reader first gets to know Florentin as a character who rejoices in living in the moment. But another female counterfoil rectifies that. When Florentin learns of his wife's pregnancy (which he recounts to his friends, and so the reader learns about this only some chapters into the novel) he develops a strong attachment to his unborn child and experiences for the first time what it means to put another person ahead of himself. After having discovered later his wife has aborted the child out of vain concern for her figure, he nearly kills her, and, having lost a sense of inner direction, flees. The honest, responsible, and quaint love between his friends, Juliane and Eduard at the Count of Schwarzenberg's estate, serves as an idyllic counterfoil to Florentin's resultant rootlessness and restlessness. It should also be noted, however, that this stable and reliable love appears as a watered-down version of Florentin's dream of an all-encompassing relationship. Reliability has its cost.

Identity and role-expectations: With Florentin, Schlegel created a masterpiece of a vague character. The reader never knows who exactly Florentin is; he only ever introduces himself with his first name, claiming that nobody would know his family anyway. Neither his name, nor his attributes

[21] The reader knows that Florentin instructs a servant to wait for him in the forest to aid his departure. However, the vanishing act leaves both readers and Florentin's friends questioning the reality of their encounter.

or his appearance are clearly gendered, and neither his past nor his connections ever help to tie him down. Schlegel does not limit this subtle blurring of gender-demarcations to Florentin alone, though, and here things get icky. In one rather telling episode, Florentin's friend Juliane agrees to dress as a boy so that she can join Florentin and Eduard in a joyful outing. However, this adventure quickly becomes a farce. They end up in a thunderstorm that scares timid Juliane nearly to death. Soaking wet, they hide in a servants' hut, where Juliane decides to never make use of such props again. Thus chapter 12 closes with the statement: "Juliane had experienced her dependency and had to admit to herself that she should not dare to deal [with life] outside of her limits, without her bonds [*Bande*] and her artificial comfort [*erkünstelte Bequemlichkeit*]."[22] A call for emancipation surely sounds different; in particular as this stands in explicit contradistinction to Schleiermacher's *Idee zu einem Katechismus der Vernunft für edle Frauen* (published in fragments in *Athenaeum* in 1798, see here Becker-Cantarino, section V). In its second article of faith (*Glaubenssatz*), Schleiermacher calls women to live in order to "make themselves independent of the limitations of their sex" (ibid.). Juliane, faced with a rather minor obstacle, promises herself to do just the opposite. We can assume that Schlegel's contemporaneous readers were sensitive to this contrast. We might read this as Schlegel's critique of the 'typically female' gender role: Juliane is too naïve, too dependent on others, too sensitive to ever dare again to get out of her wonderfully convenient box.

In contradistinction to the female characters, Florentin, the "child of fate", seeks to create his own life, but also ends up having to re-design himself with every new situation: as the brother, the lover, the friend. On the one hand, this could be understood as referencing Schlegel's need to reinvent herself as being the daughter, the wife, and the beloved; but in its non-directedness and final indecision, on the other hand, it seems less an apt candidate of a counterfoil to *Lucinde*, but rather bears echoes of the *Tugendbund* and its changing liaisons. Adaptability in itself is not enough to create an enduring personality. As such, Florentin appears as a literal nobody who can fit in anywhere, who is not tampered by cultural differences or class distinctions. Such a character could serve as an image of a modern individual. Within the novel, though, this it does not move *beyond* Schiller's critique of modern man; in the reader's impression, the character remains shattered. In

[22] "Juliane hatte die Erfahrung ihrer Abhängigkeit gemacht, und musste es sich gestehen, dass sie es nicht so unbedingt wagen dürfe, außer ihrer Grenzen, und ohne ihre Bande und ihre erkünstelte Bequemlichkeit fertig zu werden" (end of chapter 12). I thank David W. Wood for his helpful comments on my translations. All remaining mistakes are, of course, mine.

short, it does not offer much more but a mildly ironic commentary on then-current overused images in novels. The aesthetic play cannot quite develop as fully as it should. If the only option is to vanish into the unknown, both for the protagonist and his creator, then there is yet not enough imaginative room for the new. And at first, history agreed with Dorothea Schlegel by simply forgetting her and her work. But however unpolished her creations might have been (and incomplete in light of what she could have created, had she not decided to 'serve' her second husband to the brink of self-denial), Schlegel showcases the guts that it takes to be herself. Other female romantic authors such as Bettina Brentano-von Arnim, Karoline von Günderrode, Sophie Mereau, Ottilie von Goethe, and many more show how to walk this path even further, but all this deserves other volumes on their own.[23]

With this volume, let us hope that we can shed some new light on the ways in which art and freedom are conceptualized in their rich interdependence.[24]

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[23] I should also mention that a more thorough appreciation of Dorothea Veit-Schlegel's oeuvre will be possible due to the work at the Friedrich und Dorothea Schlegel Forschungsstelle at the JGU Mainz, but also through the work of the DFG project "Romantikforschung" at the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt/M. See also the upcoming volume edited by Martina Wernli, *Mit rasender Freude dichten. Das Werk Dorothea Schlegels neu lesen* (Stuttgart: Metzler, in press).

[24] My special thanks goes to my great fellow discussants at the workshop on woman philosophers, organized by Corey Dyck at Western University in London, Ontario, in 2017, and, and the interested crowd at my presentation at the SWIP conference in Dublin, Ireland in 2018, at the *Women in Philosophy Lecture Series*, organized by Alice Walla in Bayreuth, 2021, and at our mini-workshop in preparation for this volume in February 2023.

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