

“Lights Out! Lights Out!”

Women and the Enlightenment

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Women and the Enlightenment? Is that a variant of “men and the Enlightenment,” extracting one subset of participants from a major eighteenth-century movement to see what their specific contributions to the movement and their benefits from it were—although of course not all men of the time could or did join? Or is it more like “peasants and the Enlightenment,” identifying a population that existed at the same time as this literary, philosophical, and broadly cultural undertaking and was one of its occasional targets but whose members were not really participants? Feminist scholars in recent years have frequently examined what Enlightenment men said, directly and indirectly, about women. Jane Flax, for example, concentrating on Kant’s “An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?” argues that Enlightenment depends on the unspoken occlusion of women, especially as mothers and caregivers, and that it assumes women to be absorbed in the work of maintaining, reproducing, and serving bodies, thereby allowing men to think of themselves as having pure, disembodied, noncontingent access to reason. Furthermore, with Kant’s opening and repeated invocation of Enlightenment as the departure from childhood and arrival at autonomous adulthood, the world of childhood and family—the realm allotted to women’s attention—is implicitly consigned to the zone of the unenlightened, where fear and cowardice allow tyranny to reign (to employ some of Kant’s terms).¹ In his essay, Kant especially ignores the institution that confines women and that he in other writings describes as a contract requiring women’s subordination: marriage. My question is not so much about the philosophical implications of Enlightened men’s thought as about the texts and lived experiences of eighteenth-century German women who

belonged to the classes where Enlightenment was cultivated. As the gender system and its accompanying institutions such as marriage and education changed in the second half of the eighteenth century, in what ways did the interaction of gender and Enlightenment wedge windows and doors open to the light differently for men and women?

Could women have an Enlightenment movement corresponding to the movement of scientific, philosophical, literary, and civil discourse and activity that educated middle-class and aristocratic men enjoyed throughout most of the eighteenth century? And if women could, did they?² The cultural situation of eighteenth-century German women differed significantly from that of men from the same few educated and leisured groups. (The majority of the population, consisting of rural peasants and urban underclasses, only rarely had the chance to be anything other than the occasional targets of Enlightenment projects.)³ As is increasingly recognized, the prevailing ideology about women—the general buzz that formed the context of Kant’s published comments—can be briefly summarized: it too was androcentric and misogynist. Consider, for example, the commonplace equation of maleness with humanity⁴ and the exclusion of women from key situations, including from universities and most reading societies. Yet the abstractly universalizing rhetoric of the Enlightenment often seemed to readmit the spurned sex (and, in the cases of certain philosophes, especially Helvetius, Condorcet,⁵ and Hippel,⁶ explicit argumentation did so as well). What has not yet been adequately acknowledged is the almost complete success of the exclusionist faction in stifling women, preventing them from moving beyond the mute role of audience into unmuffled roles as Enlightened speaker, Enlightened writer, or Enlightened thinker. Recent scholarship on the Enlightenment often mentions some instance of women’s exclusion but fails to note that over the course of the hundred or so years⁷ that the period lasted, the minuscule number of women actively and openly participating in this supposedly emancipatory Enlightenment never increased.⁸ Women were not just excluded from one opportunity or another and not just written about in a masculinist way. With great consistency, ideological pronouncements permitted women only the roles of (improvable) object⁹ or facilitating hostess,¹⁰ not that of agent, of subject, or, to use the term Kant treats with special privilege, of scholar. And, more important, with rare exceptions, women in Germany were unable to evade the proclaimed embargos and subordinate assignments. Women were excluded from full participation in the German Enlightenment, and

even the vast majority of the women who most aspired to participate were seldom allowed more than supporting roles.

My argument depends on understanding the Enlightenment—specifically, its rationalist strand—as only one thread of intellectual and cultural discourse occurring in the eighteenth century.¹¹ As the period proceeded, two movements branched off within the Enlightenment: first came the *Empfindsamkeit* (Sensibility), which becomes discernible as a separate movement shortly before midcentury; then, in Germany, came the Sturm und Drang, which is usually dated to approximately 1770–84. Scholars in the past twenty years have shown the gendered qualities of these two branches, with *Empfindsamkeit* accepting women’s participation as writers and as readers and Sturm und Drang a decidedly masculinist movement in its membership and themes. But while both *Empfindsamkeit* and Sturm und Drang are today usually sited within the broader term of German Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*), it is that specific movement—that is, the form of Enlightenment that was little affected by either of the submovements within it—with which I am here concerned. Women could not participate fully in the non-*Empfindsamkeit* versions of the Enlightenment.¹² In short, during the period when Enlightenment values and efforts reigned among Germany’s powerful cultural and intellectual elite, women were overwhelmingly limited to the role of wards, often charming, often difficult, and sometimes dangerous. Those women who insisted on speaking parts could perform them in the zone of *Empfindsamkeit*, not *Aufklärung*.

In the first part of this chapter, I concentrate on women’s relation to the Enlightenment by putting three documents into dialogue with each other: Kant’s essay defining Enlightenment, Friderika Baldinger’s autobiographical sketch (written in 1782 or earlier, published posthumously in 1791), and Melchior Adam Weikard’s account of his life (written and published in 1784, the same year in which Kant’s essay appeared).¹³ The three documents, of course, are themselves parts of larger conversations of the period.¹⁴ Also, although Kant’s essay is a canonical text (then and especially now), it is by no means a complete description of what the Enlightenment meant in the eighteenth century. And, taken alone, neither Weikard’s nor Baldinger’s autobiographies can be understood as a transparent account of a man’s or a woman’s experience of the Enlightenment period, but the broad similarity of genre (scholarly autobiography) of these two texts offsets some of the limitations or peculiarities marking each because of its

form. Similarities in the social and cultural positioning of Weikard and Baldinger (class status, parents' education, geocultural setting of their childhoods, marginality of their educations) also make them a good pair, and the closeness in dates of composition of all three pieces helps to make them functional for a synchronic analysis. Furthermore, the small-town and village childhoods of Weikard and Baldinger match them with a large portion of the best-known representatives of the German Enlightenment, as do their adulthoods in the proximity of universities.

The second part of this chapter examines the economic context of women's Enlightenment positioning, again concentrating on Baldinger in terms of Kant's formulations. To offset the dangers of overreliance on the texts of Baldinger, Kant, and Weikard, the final, much briefer part of this chapter shifts to broader terrain, exploring what a closer examination of the roles available in the Enlightenment shows about women's exclusion.

I.

Kant's essay opened with a succinct and emphatic formulation:

Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is *self-incurred* if its cause is not lack of understanding [*Verstand*], but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. (54)

He continued soon thereafter with the statement, "For enlightenment of this kind, all that is needed is *freedom*" (55). Yet Kant was cautious about freedom and quick to make distinctions, identifying one kind of limitation of freedom that provided an obstacle to Enlightenment and another kind of limitation of freedom that promoted it. He went on to describe how certain influential and pernicious people persuade others to accept harmful limitations: "The guardians who have kindly taken upon themselves the work of supervision will soon see to it that by far the largest part of mankind (including the entire fair sex) should consider the step forward to maturity not only as difficult but also as highly dangerous" (54). Considering his sarcastic tone in this description of the self-appointed guardians, the notion of positive limitations of freedom is at first unexpected. Before elaborating on it,

Kant clarified the kind of unlimited freedom that the Enlightenment process required: the freedom to make public use of one's reason. "But by the public use of one's own reason I mean that use which anyone may make of it *as a man of learning* addressing the entire *reading public*" (55).¹⁵ The area in which freedom could be limited was that of "private" use, which meant, as he clarified later, in various civil posts or government offices (57). With this definition of a private zone in which freedom need not be available, Kant said nothing about the sphere in which almost all women of the social strata where Enlightenment was being practiced spent almost all of their lives, the sphere of the home. Perhaps because Kant said the only place where freedom was necessary to propagate Enlightenment was the public sphere of a scholar and his readers, unfreedom in the home was not a problem. If so, the supposedly self-imposed immaturity of the "whole beautiful sex" was insignificant for Enlightenment, because women were absent from both the public and the private areas that Kant discussed. Indeed, perhaps women's failure to attain Enlightenment cannot be considered quite so self-incurred after all, given that they generally lacked access to the only spaces where Enlightenment was practiced.

Friderika Baldinger's self-narrative is a fascinating document in this context. It is not an explanation of why Baldinger had failed to become Enlightened or a defense against charges such as those implied by Kant with his accusations of laziness and cowardice (which he called "the reasons why such a large proportion of men, even when nature has long emancipated them from alien guidance . . . , nevertheless gladly remain immature for life" [54]).¹⁶ On the contrary, the text exudes pride, even if that pride is cloaked in modesty. Baldinger titled her piece "Essay about the Education of My Intellect: To One of My Friends" (*Versuch über meine Verstandeserziehung: An einen meiner Freunde*) and explained this conjoining of reason with education in the opening short paragraph: "I am supposed to write the history of my intellect [*die Geschichte meines Verstandes*]? As if I had so much intellect that it would be worth the effort to trace its path. I am not writing this in that way but as a contribution about my education to the extent that it had an influence on my whole character" (15). *Verstand* (understanding, reason, intellect) of course constituted a key term in Kant's essay as well, since using one's own intellect without supervision was essential to Enlightenment, but Baldinger maintained that the history of her reason was insufficiently important by itself, combining it

instead with the story of her education and with the impact of both education and reason on her character.

Remarkably, Kant did not raise the issue of education in his essay. He simply assumed an educated and financially secure public, including members who did not bother to become enlightened: “If I have a book to have understanding [*Verstand*] in place of me, a spiritual adviser to have a conscience for me, a doctor to judge my diet for me, and so on, I need not make any efforts at all. I need not think, so long as I can pay” (54). The opening and closing terms of this description strongly suggest that Kant’s first-person sample of an unenlightened person was male, for not only were men the most likely owners of books (just as they were most likely to have money to pay) but they also had the autonomy within the family to decide which book they might chose to follow and how they would spend their money. Kant’s speaker was not taking into account the wishes, demands, claims, and limitations imposed on most women readers by their spouses or parents or children. This may be Kant’s example of a person not using his reason without supervision, but, as Baldinger’s autobiography strongly suggests, far more basic forms of control, dependence, and limitation affected girls and women before they could even reach the level of self-imposed immaturity that Kant scorned.

Thus, Baldinger described growing up in a household in which the first of Kant’s conditions even for an unenlightened person—that of relying on a book to “to have understanding in place of me”—was possible only if the book was a Bible. Baldinger’s father, whom she called “by all accounts [a] very wise and reasonable man,” had died while she was young, and she was raised mainly by her mother. “She raised me according to her views, pious and Christian. But I could summarize all her teachings in the following words: *Pious* and *chaste* is what you must be” (15). Kant discussed at length the situation of pastors and the requirement that they preach doctrine to their congregations, even if they had doubts about it, but he insisted they must also have freedom to take on the role of scholars and write about their doubts for the public forum; according to Kant’s terminology, the relation of a pastor to his flock was private and thus not free. What Baldinger described was the outcome of pastors’ doctrinal conformity, especially as simplified to and then by women. Baldinger’s mother, if she followed the precepts of self-limitation that she taught her daughter, would remain quite unaffected by scholarly disputes about religious issues since she

confined her reading to the Bible and the hymnal and thus would not read the “public” arguments of pastors. Indeed, it becomes clear that the same pastors who in their role as scholars might have qualified as agents of Enlightenment by Kant’s standard would in their “private” roles serve as precisely the kindly guardians who could make the independent use of one’s reason seem dangerous and misguided.

In addition to being spiritually and sensually self-limiting (“*pious* and *chaste*”) in a manner reinforced by their influential pastors, many eighteenth-century German women like Baldinger’s mother also lacked the money that Kant had blithely assumed for his example of unenlightened thought. The daughter explained, “My mother lost all her fortune in the war—she could therefore spend nothing on my education” (15). And she continued with a note perhaps of bemusement, perhaps sarcasm, “Experience tells how much the intellectual powers *gain* under such oppressive circumstances” (15, emphasis added). Fortunately, Baldinger had a paternal aunt who “had much intellect [*Verstand*] and also wit.” The aunt and niece read the books of the aunt’s husband, a doctor: a collection of ghost stories, dialogues of the dead, and the like. He also subscribed to scholarly news periodicals, including the *Göttingische Gelehrte Anzeigen*. Comparing the reporting there of details about the lives of scholars with the reports in a popular newspaper about the lives of kings and kaisers, Baldinger got her “first sense of respect for scholarliness, because scholarly men received just as much honor as did the potentates of the earth” (16). She concluded, “I wanted so badly to become learned and was exasperated that my sex excluded me from that” (16). She did not elaborate on how this exclusion was conveyed to her or how it was justified. Evidently she was sure that there was no need to offer such details since her readers would not doubt that indeed her sex excluded her from scholarliness.

Based on the unsystematic and mostly informal educational system for girls and on the life histories of many eighteenth-century women, it was clearly almost impossible for a girl of the educated middle class or lower aristocracy to become scholarly according to the standards of the time. Indeed, women were members of the “educated” middle class only in the sense that they had close family connections to men whose education usually included at least some time at a university, although the women themselves could have any level of learning, even down to minimal literacy. Given the Enlightenment emphasis on a trained intellect, women’s hindered access to learning constituted an impediment to their participation in the movement (although the university curricu-

lum for men was primarily intended as job training, not as an opportunity for versatile intellectual growth).¹⁷ In the context of Kant's essay, the argument was repeatedly made that although people might have had no freedom to think or to disagree with prevailing ideas in their private (work-related) roles, they had complete freedom of thought and argument as scholars. Indeed, based on "What Is Enlightenment?" it was scholars, broadly defined, who practiced Enlightenment. Thus, a soldier had to obey orders, even those he considered mistaken, but "as a scholar," he could subject those orders to written scrutiny and in this sense resist them. And a citizen had to pay taxes, even if he considered them unjust, but "as a scholar" he could discuss the propriety of any levy he wished. Likewise "a clergyman is bound to instruct his pupils and his congregation in accordance with the doctrines of the church he serves. . . . But as a scholar he is completely free as well as obliged to impart to the public all his carefully considered and well-intentioned thoughts on the mistaken aspects of those doctrines" (56). If women could not become scholarly, could they have—and, more to the point, did they have—the tools to practice the freedom to write "as a scholar" and to publish the results? Alternatively, if women could not be soldiers or full-fledged citizens or pastors or professors, could they be "scholars"? Kant's one explicit reference to women in his essay occurs parenthetically, in the passage about how for "the largest part of mankind (including the entire fair sex)," the fear of taking steps toward intellectual autonomy had been implanted by various kind guardians. In the rest of the essay, Kant discounted and disqualified all women who might have been exceptions by simply omitting them, formulating all his many examples and hypotheses about men—soldiers, bureaucrats, princes, and, ironically, pastors, the group of men who in their professional lives had the largest influence on women but who, if they followed Kant's advice, did little or nothing to help women intellectually.

Still, Kant's remark about the difficulty and danger women perceived in moving toward Enlightenment raises the question of whether, by Kant's standards, Baldinger and other women like her too easily surrendered their desire for scholarliness. Discouraging circumstances of course existed—comparative poverty, lack of sufficient reading materials, lack of schooling,¹⁸ and the informal "ideological exclusion" of women from advanced learning.¹⁹ The token public endorsements of a few scholarly women that had been proclaimed by the supposed champion of women's education, Johann Christoph Gottsched, in his

early Enlightenment heyday had never extended far beyond university towns, and efforts by a few bold women to extend women's rights and privileges were ending just when Baldinger was born.²⁰ "*Sapere aude!*" Kant had exhorted. "Have courage to use your *own* understanding" (54). But still, was Friderika Baldinger's apparently quick acceptance in her youth of the exclusion of women from scholarliness an example of women's failure to dare?

The answer is not obvious. Kant was arguing for autonomously thinking adults, but Baldinger faced the key obstacles to her goal when she was a child. As a young adult, she confronted new difficulties. When she was twenty-two, her brother, the only male in her immediate family, died. The autobiography refers to this death as her mother's loss of anticipated financial support and as Friderika's loss of an intellectual kindred spirit, although the brother was replaced to some degree by the new pastor who lent her books and allowed her to listen to scholarly conversation. Perhaps admitting his flock to his informal deliberations represented more than one pastor's solution to the problem of preaching a doctrine with which he disagreed.²¹ Friderika Baldinger, as will be seen, depicts the opportunity to listen to discussions conducted by her friend, Pastor Johann Wilhelm Kranichfeld, as intellectually invaluable. At age twenty-five she married twenty-four-year-old Ernst Gottfried Baldinger; four years later he was a professor at the University of Jena and probably had already started collecting the books that were the source of part of his later fame. In her autobiographical sketch, she offered a condensed account of her husband's impact on her intellect and marriage: "To this man, whom I respect above everything, to whom I am so very attached, I owe all the development of my soul's powers. He cultivated my intellect and improved my will and my heart. In his company I have read very much and from his conversations enjoyed the excerpt of more than a thousand books."²² In fact, in discussing her marriage, Baldinger blandly stated her distaste for sexuality and posited her efforts to educate her "head" as a compensation for it, summarizing, "My love of learning grew the more I became acquainted with it. I believe I would have become a scholar if providence had not destined me for the cooking pot, and I still find that one can use the understanding of men in their books when doing women's work" (22). She gave no examples. Indeed, her tone hinted at paid work's devaluing effect on unpaid work—typically, domestic labor performed by women. The work of educated middle-class women, signified by the cooking pot, seems to lack respectability

compared to the intellectual and implicitly income-generating work of male scholars.

By 1772, after eight years of marriage, Friderika Baldinger had five children. The following year, one died and another was born. In 1774, two more died. In the sketch—I use that term because of the extreme brevity of the piece, eight pages in modern print—she wrote only this: “Six childbeds have contributed more than a little to the growth of my knowledge, for I have often started to read again in the first moments after I was released from the hands of the midwife. And these six childbeds, when I could read undisturbed, were for me in many ways recuperation for my soul” (22). Here Baldinger repeated her fondness for learning and asserted that in the midst of raising a family, she continued her devotion to reading. Thus, after her marriage, she seems to have had and used vastly improved chances for education. In the process, Baldinger reinterpreted childbirth not as a relation to immature children but as a time for self-education. She thus obscures what is usually taken as a key instance of sexual difference between men and women—women’s ability to give birth—and describes it in terms of an activity that was, at least in the abstract, not gender specific: reading.

Did Friderika Baldinger attain the special degree of autonomous thinking that Kant stipulated as the mark of the Enlightened person? With all her reading and with her relatively good opportunities as the wife of a professor, living in various university towns, and friendly with free-thinking professors such as essayist, aphorist, and physicist Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742–99) and mathematician and epigrammist Abraham Gotthelf Kästner (1719–1800), perhaps she did. However, the degree of indebtedness to her husband that Baldinger found it necessary or prudent to express and the extent to which that material seems to displace other material from her brief text cause me to doubt it.²³ What is definite is that she turned down apparent opportunities to contribute to public discussion of the kind that Kant ratified: she refused to write for publication despite invitations to do so and decided against seeing her self-narrative into print.²⁴

Friderika Baldinger was born in 1739 in a village in Thuringia; Melchior Adam Weikard was born three years later in a Frankonian village. His self-narrative, written about two years after Baldinger’s, addressed remarkably similar issues in distinctively different ways. To begin with the relationship of autobiographer to audience, Baldinger indicated in her subtitle that she was addressing her sketch to a friend. Weikard wrote to the general public and wrote from the safe distance

of St. Petersburg, far from family and most acquaintances. Distance and the absence of personal connection, reinforced by means of the literary marketplace, insulated him from the constraints that seemed to hold Baldinger back from critical comments regarding any living person and pushed her instead into almost obsequious praise. But Weikard also adopted a breezy attitude toward his readers and his text. His preface reads,

For a long time scholars have been accused of preferring to write about themselves. I will not be an exception to the rule here and have therefore made the decision to deliver to the public my own biography, a history that to be sure is the most indifferent and most insignificant thing on God's earth for most people and that has the sole good quality that no one is required to read or believe it who has no evident desire to do so. ([3-4])²⁵

Conversely, in a prefatory letter to her husband, Baldinger wrote,

When I had to write down this essay about the education of my intellect at the request of one of my friends, you had the wish that it might be printed for you and our children.

I properly declined, because I considered it of too little importance and I consider it so still. But should I deny myself the joy of leaving even one of your wishes unfulfilled, if it is possible for me to fill it? (14)

In her representation of extreme humility, she evidently became confused—a Freudian slip?—expressing pleasure at leaving one of her husband's desires unmet. Then, however, she further pondered the question of publication and wrote another letter, published as another preface, explaining her ultimate decision not to publish.

The attached pages I originally intended to have printed and thereby to please you, because they once had the good fortune of giving you pleasure. But I changed my mind, partly because I did not know whether you would like to read the dedication to yourself and partly because to the world I am myself a far too insignificant creature as to be demanding anyone should read about the education of my intellect in print. (11)

Friderika Baldinger had originally thought that the request topos,²⁶ amplified by the note of marital obligation and the established reputation of E. G. Baldinger, would suffice to justify publication despite her lack of public importance. But then she reconsidered, unsure of her husband's approval and even more fixated on her own unimportance. She lacked Weikard's insouciance. First, although she followed the conventions of the scholarly biography as he did, as a woman she lacked scholarly credentials and thus could not simply announce, as Weikard did, that she was joining an established trend, a trend automatically available to him as a university-educated man. She could use the conventions of the scholarly self-narrative but could not claim to be a scholar. And while Weikard also considered himself unimportant and even said so in a phrase very similar to hers (he called his history "the most indifferent and most insignificant thing [*Ding*] on God's earth"; she called herself "a far too insignificant creature [*Ding*]"), he simply turned the fate of his account over to the public to read or not. Baldinger evidently feared not that she would be ignored by the public but that she would be condemned. In short, Weikard, as a man, could have a relation to his audience that differed distinctly from the relationship Baldinger expected as a woman. The literary marketplace as a general mechanism separating writer from reader helped to create the public freedom on which Kant insisted in his repeated examples of what men in various professions could do in their roles as scholarly authors. When the author was a woman, however, the protection melted. Women writers were automatically subjected to personal, moral scrutiny of their right to write, scrutiny that made it much less likely that they would take the easygoing attitude that Weikard assumed.

Weikard's confidence is all the more striking because he explained so convincingly the several ways in which he felt inadequate, insecure, and poorly educated—somewhat resembling the sense of inadequacy, insecurity, and poor education of women well exemplified by Friderika Baldinger. Weikard, nearsighted and physically deformed since childhood, had missed two years of schooling and was socially inept. When he returned to school, he had ignorant teachers, so that what he learned was long since out of date. At the university, matters were hardly better; indeed, he had no chance at all to study several important areas of learning—specifically, German grammar and orthography. When people heard he had studied medicine at Würzburg rather

than Göttingen, his qualifications were immediately questioned. And he strongly agreed, citing miserable instruction by reluctant professors. In short, even young men who attended schools and universities could be very poorly educated—perhaps as poorly as many of their unschooled sisters. Yet meager education at an inferior university did not intimidate Weikard. Why not? In addition to the general privileging of his gender, the obvious reason is one of men's specific privileges: no matter how little a man had learned or how weak the university, formal attendance there mattered most, and formal attendance was effectively reserved for men. In the context of Weikard's biography, the experience of a poor education gave him a platform for a critique of schools and universities in small Catholic states. He described his university education in detail before making an important point: "In such little states the first step toward having more diligent people would therefore really be to eliminate the universities" (30). He argued that Catholic states gave professors such low pay and so little freedom that good instruction could not be expected; furthermore, because universities in small states were so conveniently located, parents sent their sons, unprepared, unworthy, and disinterested though they might have been. Better, Weikard argued, to improve the local preparatory schools and then send talented, motivated boys (no mention of girls) to good universities elsewhere rather than continue the operation of mediocre universities everywhere. In short, Weikard used his experience to take a stand and make a public argument "as a scholar."

Why did Baldinger not do something similar? There are the grains of several such possibilities in her text. For example, she described a hypocritical Pietist:

My mother's brother was a Pietist, a rich miser, who, praying, deceived everyone who had anything to do with him. His home was in Halle, and he counted himself among the very most pious sect of those well-known head hangers. This man also lived with us half a year because he wanted to consolidate his fortune in Thuringia and cheat his poor relatives in Halle out of it so that the wealthy Orphan's Home [a famous Halle institution] could inherit it. (17)

The text alludes to hypocrisy among Pietists and to philanthropy occurring at the expense of poor relatives, but Baldinger's text developed none of these ideas into a broader insight or critique.

Another opportunity her text skipped concerned education for girls.

Baldinger explained that she could have learned much from her brother had her “good mother” not believed that reading any books other than the Bible and hymnal was a deadly sin for a girl, sometimes locking away the books and sending the daughter to the spinning wheel. The mother was concerned that the girl was being spoiled by her brother and “would never marry a professor anyway” (18). Friderika Baldinger’s mother was articulating a powerful control mechanism over women in the eighteenth century: if a thorough and extensive education diminished a daughter’s marriage chances or too narrowly defined her list of possible husbands, then education was in fact a dangerous thing for girls, given that the lives of single women were typically (though certainly not invariably) difficult.²⁷ As long as men of the educated middle class demonstrated a preference for marrying relatively uneducated women, they signaled to all women both the likely waste and the possible danger of devoting educational resources to girls. Education for girls is a topic that comes up throughout the sketch, of course, but nowhere did Baldinger analyze her experience or offer a critique of the social exclusion of girls and women from more than basic education or spell out how marriage calculations constrained girls’ chances to learn. She said clearly that she thought her mother was excessively cautious in this matter and even claimed near the end of her piece that women could use the “reason of men from their books” while doing women’s work, but she did not explain, failing to update the reasoning that Christiane Mariane von Ziegler had made in 1739 (when Baldinger was born) about women and learning or that Dorothea Christiane Erxleben had written a little later.²⁸

A third possible topic for argument raised in Baldinger’s brief self-narrative concerns the meaning of marriage for women. Baldinger sarcastically referred to the possibility of securing her happiness by marriage, if, she immediately noted, “one secures one’s happiness by selling one’s body for life to a man whom one cannot love in order to get food and drink” (21). Again, she did not augment her critical statement with argumentation—what Kant called “*räsoniren*.” In this instance, Baldinger’s text resembles Weikard’s: both self-mockingly record stressful attitudes toward sexuality and marriage in their youth and changes as they approached marriage. Baldinger commented about her younger self, “I wanted never to marry because I had a feeling of disgust about all physical love; I had all the talents for being a saint, I was pious, a vestal, I was gushy; the only thing I could not do was perform miracles” (21). Weikard wrote of himself at approximately the same

age, “More than once I was the biggest penitent there can be. I wept, raved, practiced all possible penitential acts, and was almost in despair especially because I had concluded from reading a religious book that I had lost my innocence. In reality I had no idea what the loss of innocence was” (24). Ignorance and religion were deeply intertwined with sexuality here, making little distinction between young women and young men or Protestant (Baldinger) and Catholic (Weikard). When marriage became a reality or a serious prospect, however, the self-satire ended. Weikard described himself as still innocent (“a chaste young man”) but as a legitimately sexual being: “But now the example of others and my own warm temperament toward the other sex enticed me” (36). Baldinger, conversely, continued to reject sexuality in contorted grammar that suggests her discomfort: “Since the higher powers of my soul always outweigh everything lower, I do not know whether, considering me as a woman, [my husband] has always found me according to his wishes [*Da meine oberen Seelenkräfte immer das Übergewicht für allen Niedern behalten haben; so weis ich nicht, ob er sich, als Frau betrachtet, bei mir allemal nach seinen Wünschen gestanden hat*]” (22). A few lines later, she again became more direct: “I tried to correct my mistakes by cultivating my head more; I put friendship in the place of animal love, and I still believe that there can be no nobler [love] than ours because it is founded by both sides on respect” (22). Having described her first marriage offers as invitations to prostitute herself, Baldinger as a respectable and Enlightened woman represents her position in the marriage she accepts as asexual and antisensual. Why did she not use her view of women’s side of marriage to formulate a larger critique?

Perhaps she did not want to find herself in a dispute about marriage with the men whose friendships she counted on as evidence that she was an intelligent and interesting woman. Near the end of her account, a scheme she proposed for a modest evaluation of her understanding shows how much she saw herself in relation to certain distinguished men: “If you look step by step from me to the heights where Kästner and Lichtenberg became my friends, I believe that even the dumbest person would gain from both with regard to understanding [*Verstand*]. Does it deserve admiration if I have become bearable through such good company?” (24). Her final sentence again picks up the motif of becoming bearable: “As a woman, I have become bearable; how little I would be however as a man! [*Als Frau bin ich erträglich geworden, wie klein würde ich doch als Mann seyn!*]” (24). The scale she used for

women was bearable to unbearable; for men, it was small to (implicitly) great. She previously described herself as “the wife of a scholarly and wise man who is satisfied with me” (19). Baldinger saw herself always in relation to notable scholarly men whose approval was the crucial measure of her worth. Baldinger’s treatment of the exclusion of women from scholarliness as a matter that required no explanation, and her criticism of it only in the version promulgated by another woman—her mother—perhaps indicates that the certifiedly learned men around her did not wish to have her or any other woman or women in general admitted to their ranks. Because Friderika Baldinger’s sense of self-worth depended so greatly on the approval of these men—and because writing an autobiography required self-esteem—Baldinger dared not risk losing their approval by making the outrageous argument that marriage, even to a man from their ranks, was a lopsided arrangement forced on women by gendered economic and cultural conditions or that women should have been allowed to study at universities (an argument that had already been put forward).

II.

Within the rationalist discourse widely used by the *Aufklärung*, admitting women to study would seem like an acceptable notion, both tending to equalize the economic roles of women and men and promising further developments congruent with the movement’s universalizing rhetoric about human perfectibility. So why had this proposal not prospered, and why did Baldinger not pick up on it? Perhaps part of the answer is that better-educated middle-class women posed a potential threat to educated middle-class men’s privileges in three respects: the men’s recognized claim to jobs requiring good education could have been reduced if women acquired similar educations; in turn, men’s superiority to women in the familial and societal hierarchy could have been at risk if women had independent incomes;²⁹ and finally, men’s superiority in the privileged category of intellect might not have been so reassuringly evident.³⁰

Much has been written about the effect on women of eighteenth-century changes in the family or household, which until then had been the chief structuring unit for the lives of both women and men.³¹ The women whose lives were structured by a household were not just its wives and daughters but also unmarried aunts, various widows, and significant numbers of servants. As a new segment of the middle class

arose that was distinguished by its education (as put to use in income-generating professions), the traditional representations of the household and its functions became less useful: these new families resembled neither a country nobleman's estate writ small nor a city guildsman's house of family and apprentices all contributing to the family business. For the educated middle class, the function of the family was diminishing, no longer oriented either toward self-sufficiency in the manner of a country estate or toward production of goods in the manner of a craftsman's household; thus, the functional justification for the hierarchical superiority of the male head of household had eroded.³² As a girl, Friderika Baldinger understood men's power over women to be based on a claim to superior reason that appeared to her unjustified.

I was already beginning to find a great proportion of people unbearable to me, and especially men who were not scholarly. I had gotten an idea into my head: men must simply all be smarter than women, because they had claimed control over us; I found only the smallest number, however, who had a right to that based on superiority of understanding. This turned me against a whole sex, which I, ignorant girl, judged on the basis of the narrow circle where I lived. (18)

From the perspective of her youthful experience, she could have argued for the equality of men and women and pointed to the necessity of a considerable search to locate a man who was her intellectual superior; instead, she used the existence of intellectually superior men—of course inevitable given their exclusive access to education—to belittle her earlier analysis and to justify her husband's authority over her. She did not mention his far greater economic power or the weakness of his exclusive claim to that form of superiority.

During the eighteenth century, a substantial portion of the types of moderate- to high-status work that granted the ability to sustain oneself and others was organized in such a way that women could have performed it. The work of the educated middle class required schooling but did not demand physical strength and was in many cases even performed in the home. Under these circumstances, women of the educated middle class and above could have become important income producers, joining other women already in the labor force in substantial numbers—for example, as servants in houses and as peasants in fields. Educated women conducted significant parts of their husbands' work, as in the case of Luise Adelgunde Gottsched.³³ Baldinger, hav-

ing mentioned the “sustenance worries” (21) she had faced when her brother died and her painful efforts as an unmarried young woman to earn income in ways that were incompatible with her physical and intellectual being—perhaps various forms of textile work such as sewing, embroidery, and spinning—might well have thought about the attractions of practicing a profession. Few of the men around her would have agreed: they associated the word *profession* with women only in the cunning conception of (submissive, male-supporting) womanliness as itself a profession.³⁴ Doubling the population of the potential professionals, as the word was defined when associated with men, was not the goal of these kindly guardians, whose university educations and corresponding employment were assets most valuable while scarce. The possibilities of university educations and professional careers for women were on the table during the 1740s;³⁵ by the time Baldinger wrote her sketch, however, ridicule and silencing had restored these ideas to unthinkability.³⁶ Thus, an interrogation of women’s economic roles shows women typically positioned as inferior and economically dependent on men.

Economic disadvantage supported the ideology of women’s lesser understanding and hence intellectual dependence. Baldinger prided herself on recognizing her intellectual inferiority to men, as indicated by her final sentence about being bearable as a woman but insignificant if she were evaluated as a man and by comments in her few extant personal letters. This positioning as an inferior also decreased the likelihood that she would undertake an argument in her writing. If written argumentation was an act of the Enlightened scholar, then by not engaging in written argumentation, Baldinger could again demonstrate that she knew her place in the world.

All of this sounds very much like a lack of the courage that Kant deplored. It also suggests the presence of “the guardians who have kindly taken upon themselves the work of supervision,” so that for most people the prospect of using reason independently appears “not only as difficult but also as highly dangerous” (54). Baldinger had a number of guardians who had ever so kindly undertaken to supervise her and to prevent her from taking the tumbles that Kant said were necessary if one was to learn to walk (and think) on one’s own. But these guardians were not just supervising her thought and controlling her self-esteem. One of them—her husband—had far more power over the circumstances of her life. The notion of Friderika Baldinger freely writing her own thoughts about controversial ideas “as a scholar” is

ridiculous if these ideas differed from what her domineering husband thought. Even an eighteenth-century woman who had far more confidence in her learning and who was perhaps far more learned than Baldinger—the magnitude of her learning is impossible to evaluate given current documentation—would rarely or never have had independent intellectual space if she were married. Significant numbers of eighteenth-century women were fairly or even very well educated and were not intimidated by male learning but still, given their economic dependence and ideological inferiority, did not, in Kant's terms, "dare" to disagree. Operating within male-ordered dominant discourses, they adapted their overt behavior to fit men's claim to scholarship: such women often concealed their knowledge. To avoid punishment for their trespass against men's scholarship, they diverted their skills away from the privileges of standard Enlightenment activity.

Because punishment indicates that a crime has been committed,³⁷ it is always important to watch for punishments. In the case of learned women, punishments were conducted not merely after the crime but quite vigorously in advance of it through the relentless pillorying of the learned woman, especially if her learning were productive, evident in writing.³⁸ It is thus no wonder that Baldinger, positing herself as a woman approved by men, wrote an essay about the education of her understanding that omitted any clue as to what fields of learning interested her. What were those thousand books about that she had discussed with her husband? Did they address medicine (his field), or science (Lichtenberg's), mathematics (Kästner's), literature, the arts, religion? Baldinger was a willing recipient of learning, an eager reader and listener, and thus a member of that public that Kant thought might join together to enlighten and free itself (55). Dependent on kindly guardians, however—not just for her education and self-esteem but also for her livelihood—Baldinger took no overt steps toward autonomy. Kant had written that even the person who, acting alone, threw off the leg irons of perpetual immaturity would still make an uncertain jump across the narrowest ditch (55). And if the jumper's legs were free but her breath were still pinched by a tight-strung corset, what then? In short, the often negative ideological assessment of women and their minimal economic options in Enlightened circles compared to men (added to both groups' lack of political power) left women weak. Their opportunities for changing the highly limited cultural roles assigned to women were very constricted. In the early part of the century, when egalitarian language about the sexes was most

prominent, Luise Adelgunde Gottsched evidently did not think in unison with her famous husband but, despite numerous publications, found the clearest possibility of signaling her disagreements in work she did not publish, letters to a woman friend.³⁹

III.

My claim that women were directly and indirectly filtered out of full participation and shunted instead into a subordinate status or into a less rational, less critical strand of discourse has rested thus far on accepting male definitions of the Enlightenment. If the Enlightenment is instead defined functionally, based on the cultural roles it entailed, perhaps the assessment of women's status will be more positive. Perhaps a functional analysis will rebalance the complex inequalities of gender, race, class, and sexuality in the Enlightenment.

The most important cultural roles included serving as reader of contemporary scholarly and creative literature, discussant of one's reading and ideas, developer of one's reasoning and especially of one's areas of disagreement with prevailing discourse, and disseminator of that reasoning; these explicit roles presuppose more than a little education, formal or informal, and the availability of more than a little time and energy beyond survival activities. Evidence that fulfilling these roles differed for men and women or was difficult for men as well as women does not in itself support or refute my claim that women could not and did not participate fully in the Enlightenment: the issue is not ease or uniformity but rather accomplishment. Thus, access to books for reading posed problems for men as well as women, as Weichard attested (47); even though women were likely to face a stronger dose of moral surveillance, many women had and used good opportunities to read. Similarly, while women were excluded from many formal settings for discussion—scholarly societies, many reading groups, and most (but not all) Masonic lodges—they could often attend in informal settings. Baldinger mentioned regularly seeking out the company of the pastor Kranichfeld, whom she called her “intellectual father”: “He often laughed, when, in a cloud of tobacco smoke, I sat beside him and listened with joy to what he was discussing with the others, while the remaining female company got aggravated about the eternal book jabber” (19). Negotiating between the aggressively anti-intellectual women of her town and its authoritative men speakers (both groups performing their normative gender roles), Baldinger described herself

as a listener, a female role accepted within Enlightenment terms but not approved by the “remaining female company.” Women in more favorable circumstances moved beyond listening to speaking, as Sophie Reimarus demonstrated at her famous Hamburg tea table and as Sophie Becker practiced while traveling in the company of Elisa von der Recke.⁴⁰ Education, prosperity, and rank—or at least rich or powerful connections—contributed to the qualifications of these women. Furthermore, both men and women often performed the role of discussant through the medium of letters. Correspondence could offer a place for autonomous thought, and women were considered “natural” letter writers. Writing in adulthood, Baldinger mentioned that Kranichfeld had more than a thousand letters from her.

Under especially favorable circumstances, then, women of the emerging educated classes could indeed perform many of the cultural roles of the Enlightenment. The major obstacle even for privileged women was the dissemination of ideas: Could women publicize their reasoning, especially when that reasoning disagreed with prevailing thought? Letters, of course, constituted a quasi-public form of discussion, but as long as women’s access to the institutionalized print forums of the Enlightenment was minuscule, they cannot be considered full participants because dissemination (followed by further discussion) was too essential a function to omit or to have in diminutive portions. In sum, the odds against women having the qualifications, motivation, intellectual space, and public access to fulfill all the cultural roles of Enlightenment participation, even in the homes of Enlightenment men, weighed strongly against women, and those who overcame these odds clashed with prevailing gender roles.

Of course it is also true that the cardinal cultural roles of the Enlightenment depended in turn on many other forms of work, including the most quotidian as well as the more specialized, and these invisible roles were often assigned to women. Living rooms were arranged for receiving guests. Tea was graciously poured. Children’s lives were organized and supervised. Subscriptions were collected to support the publication of new books. Sophie Reimarus excelled at these tasks and also constantly prepared her doctor-husband for evening literary discussions by telling him about the latest publications and marking key passages for him to read.⁴¹ This was a form of participation and influence, to be sure, but, as the scholarship has evaluated it so far, Reimarus’s success depended as much on the facilitating and housewifely functions she performed as on her own (anonymously published) poems⁴² or on her intellectual contacts with other culturally

involved people—principally men such as Knigge, Mendelssohn, and Wilhelm von Humboldt, with whom she corresponded. Just as women in their roles as mothers and caregivers were occluded from Enlightenment theorizing, so too as performers of the commonplace work necessary for conducting the Enlightenment project were they denied legitimacy.

Perhaps it is simply not possible to examine the Enlightenment without relying on the definitions of the men since without these men the movement did not exist. Friderika Baldinger had to deal face to face with Enlightenment men—with Lichtenberg, Kästner, and her husband, to name the three best known. In this confrontation, Baldinger had “only paradoxes to offer.”⁴³ She longed for scholarship, including its privileges, at a time when women were defined out of scholarliness. She professed to accept her exclusion but did not stop alluding to her desire. She faced the structural and epistemological problem of women who were attempting to join existing discourses that had already developed around men: such women needed to address the sexual difference that those discourses highlighted and yet to position themselves so that they qualified for esteem within those discourses. Baldinger’s attempted navigation is evident when, for example, she evaluated herself in one breath both as a woman and as a man and when she recast childbirth with books and without children. Ultimately, however, in part because the Enlightenment had little tolerance for paradoxes and ambiguities, she could not circumvent, ignore, or accept these paradoxes. She displayed this inability dramatically and painfully by falling silent. Her truncated self-narrative cannot be elaborated and cannot give more information without entangling the author in further contradictions between her illegitimate aspirations and her desire for recognition by a set of standards that denied opportunity to women like her. Given her goals and her context, Baldinger had to rely primarily on the discourse of Enlightenment to formulate her thoughts and experiences, but this discourse resisted her, as it resisted women in general, at every turn.

IV.

Women and the Enlightenment? From an early stage of experimentation with ideas of women’s intellectual improvability until the end of the period when women’s inferiority was generally treated as established, women of the educated middle class and aristocracy—with a few exceptions—could not be full participants in the Enlightenment

aside from the version of the movement leavened by *Empfindsamkeit*; the cloak of *Empfindsamkeit* enabled Sophie von La Roche to find a public voice as a novelist and later to edit and publish Friderika Baldinger's essay on the education of her reason.⁴⁴ The exceptions—the circle of women who had more complete involvement in the Enlightenment—were often unmarried, either because they were among the few who never married (poet Hedwig Sidonia Zäunemann or intellectual Elise Reimarus, sister-in-law of Sophie Reimarus and correspondent with Lessing) or because they were widows (another poet, Christiane Mariane von Ziegler, or classical translator Ernestine Reiske).⁴⁵ For some of the widows, the dangers (financial and emotional) of venturing before the reading public as scholars may have been less awful than the certainties of unsupported misery such as Friderika Baldinger's mother faced when her son died. Later in the century, after decades of living in an age of supposedly ongoing Enlightenment, the two women in Germany who came closest to full membership were divorced aristocrats of independent means, Emilie von Berlepsch and Elisa von der Recke.

High above the educated middle class and the lower aristocracy, the picture changed. Fewer kindly guardians supervised the thought of adult aristocratic women such as Friedrich the Great's insufficiently known sisters,⁴⁶ much less controlled a ruling woman, such as Catherine the Great of Russia, who was German by birth. Of all German women, those from royalty and the high aristocracy had the best chance to participate fully by Kant's standards, but these women too remained a tiny minority among the Enlighteners.

Although no middle-class profession provided the independence from guardians or the authority approximating that of a tsar, Friderika Baldinger's account of her youth indicates that the scholarly professions bore a detectable resemblance in prestige. Nor was Baldinger the only woman to realize that numerous benefits, including relief from economic dependence, could accompany the practice of a profession. Thus it was that as writing became a profession, German women began writing in growing numbers. Baldinger had barely begun to recognize the possibilities before her death in January 1786, when she was forty-six. The women who took up this option did not do so in the overt context of the Enlightenment.

The year after Friderika Baldinger's death, Christiane Sophie Ludwig (1764–1815) began her literary career with a collection called "Essays by

a Woman from the Country.” Sometime in her old age she wrote briefly about the situation of intellectually active women:

I am heartily glad that I am only lame in my foot and not in the upper story. But that is just between you and me, because you know very well that one dare not let much be heard from or out of the upper story because so many men . . . absolutely cannot stand to see lights on up there, and whenever someone tries something like that they shout at the top of their lungs, “Lights out! Lights out!”⁴⁷

Women and the Enlightenment? Only when the shutters were closed, and by Kant’s account that was not Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment occurred during a transformative period in Western history. Economic restructuring from agriculture to an industrial world was already under way in England. Political restructuring had erupted in France before the last decade of the century. Philosophical debates were refitting ethics and epistemology. In the midst of these changes, an increasingly educated and ambitious class of women was funneled away from technology and the sciences, away from universities and the professions (although one German woman, Dorothea Leporin Erxleben, succeeded in becoming a certified medical doctor and another, Dorothea Schlözer, passed university exams), away from the logic of personal autonomy. This diversion from the rationalist, critical strand of Enlightenment prepared women to be exemplars of the sex/gender characteristics that were codified toward the end of the eighteenth century and that had, as other chapters in this volume show, an important influence on women of all classes. The diversion made women less able to critique the medicalized and scientized explanations of sexual difference that were gaining sophistication and power as the nineteenth century began.⁴⁸ Exclusion from full participation in the Enlightenment specifically enlarged the uncertainties and vulnerabilities of women of the lower aristocracy and educated middle class and their dependence on men, factors that would impact their options and responses in the transitions yet to come.

Notes

1. Jane Flax, “Is Enlightenment Emancipatory?” in *Disputed Subjects: Essays on Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Philosophy* (New York, 1993), 75–91.
2. When Joan Kelly-Gadol famously asked, “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” she identified four criteria “for gauging the relative contraction

(or expansion) of the powers of Renaissance women and for determining the quality of their historical experience." The four are the control of female sexuality, the economic and political roles available to women, their opportunities for cultural participation, and the gender ideology prevailing at the time. My analysis elaborates in particular on the last two of these criteria. See Joan Kelly-Gadol, "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston, 1977), 139–40.

3. Anthony J. La Vopa, *Grace, Talent, and Merit: Poor Students, Clerical Careers, and Professional Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, 1988), discusses academic and social mobility for men from the poorest levels of German society; he does not discuss women.

4. See Gray, this volume.

5. Helvetius and Condorcet are discussed in Michèle Crampe-Casnabet, "A Sampling of Eighteenth-Century Philosophy," in *Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, ed. Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Frage, vol. 3 of *A History of Women*, ed. George Duby and Michelle Perrot (Cambridge, 1993), 338–44.

6. Ute Frevert begins her analysis of "Human Rights and Women's Duties in the Late Eighteenth Century: Bourgeois Society and Gender," in *Women in German History: From Bourgeois Emancipation to Sexual Liberation* (Oxford, 1989), 11–12, with a discussion of Hippel. See also Heide Wunder, *He Is the Sun, She Is the Moon* (Cambridge, 1998), 198–99; Ruth Dawson, "The Feminist Manifesto of Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel (1741–96)," in *Gestalt und Gestaltend: Frauen in der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Marianne Burkhard (Amsterdam, 1980), 13–32; Ruth Dawson, "Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel und seine Schrift, 'Ueber die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Weiber,'" *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik* 8 (1980): 65–69.

7. Peter-André Alt, *Aufklärung: Lehrbuch Germanistik* (Stuttgart, 1996), 7, proposes the dates 1680–1795 to include both the philosophical and literary elements of the Enlightenment; focusing on literature, I have elsewhere proposed 1725–1800 (Ruth Dawson, "Enlightenment," in *The Feminist Encyclopedia of German Literature*, ed. Friederike Eigler and Susanne Kord [Westport, 1997], 112–15).

8. In a comprehensive review of the period, Alt, *Aufklärung*, 340–48, registers approximately five hundred Enlightenment figures, only two of whom are German women (Adelgunde Gottsched and Karoline Neuber), but he never acknowledges this discrepancy. Alt names several other eighteenth-century German women, but all in his section about the family novel of sensibility (*Aufklärung*, 287–89). Sensibility (*Empfindsamkeit*) is, I argue, the necessary and permitted outlet for women's talents.

9. Good examples are the bureaucratic measures taken to control pregnant women as mentioned, for example, by Sabine Toppe, "'Polizey' und Mutterchaft: Aufklärerischer Diskurs und weibliche Lebensrealitäten in der zweiten

Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts,” in *Ordnung, Politik, und Geselligkeit der Geschlechter im 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Ulrike Weckel, Claudia Opitz, Claudia Hochstrasser, and Birgitte Tolkemitt (Göttingen, 1998), 303–22. For a discussion of the mania for making women honorary (nonparticipating) members of various German societies, see Katherine Goodman, *Amazons and Apprentices: Women and the German Parnassus in the Early Enlightenment* (Rochester, 1999).

10. Birgitte Tolkemitt, “Knotenpunkte im Beziehungsnetz der Gebildeten: Die gemischte Geselligkeit in den offenen Häusern der Hamburger Familien Reimarus und Sieveking,” in *Ordnung, Politik, und Geselligkeit*, ed. Weckel et al., 183–202.

11. Nikolaus Wegmann, *Diskurse der Empfindsamkeit: Zur Geschichte eines Gefühls in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1988), 18–20.

12. I discuss the relation of German women writers to Sturm und Drang and to *Empfindsamkeit* in Ruth Dawson, *The Contested Quill: Literature by Women in Germany, 1770–1800* (Newark, 2002). See also Claudia Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter: Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib, 1750–1850* (Frankfurt, 1992), 31.

13. Immanuel Kant, *Kant's Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, 1970). Page numbers appear in parentheses in the text.

14. Volker Kaiser, “Poeticizing the Enlightenment: The Case of Richard Rorty and Kant’s Question,” in *Impure Reasons: Dialectic of Enlightenment in Germany*, ed. W. Daniel Wilson and Robert C. Holub (Detroit, 1993), 95, notes that the often omitted portion of Kant’s title, “Answer to the Question,” indicates its status as part of a conversation.

15. In the absence of contrary contextual signals, I am willing to read all of Kant’s numerous references to men as generic rather than gender specific.

16. The translations of Baldinger’s text are my own, with page numbers referring to “*Ich wünschte so gar gelehrt zu werden*”: *Drei Autobiographien von Frauen des 18. Jahrhunderts*. ed. Magdalene Heuser, Ortrun Niethammer, Marion Roitzheim-Eisfeld, and Petra Wulbusch (Göttingen, 1994).

17. Beatrix Niemeyer, “Ausschluss oder Ausgrenzung? Frauen im Umkreis der Universitäten im 18. Jahrhundert,” in *Geschichte der Mädchen und Frauenbildung*, ed. Elke Kleinau and Claudia Opitz (Frankfurt, 1996), 276–79.

18. Baldinger’s lack of schooling is especially glaring in contrast to the education of her brother. Although her mother’s loss of wealth supposedly eliminated the funds for the daughter’s education, we find out a few pages later that her brother not only attended the Schulpforte academy for six years but then went on to the university (17). Of course it is possible that the brother’s education was supported by patrons or charitable sources such as those La Vopa describes for the sons of poor pastors (*Grace, Talent, and Merit*, 19–58). Such options were not provided for daughters.

19. Niemeyer, “Ausschluss oder Ausgrenzung?” 294.

20. Goodman, *Amazons and Apprentices*, 268–69.

21. The Enlightenment consisted of a series of discourses, some perhaps

more receptive to women's participation than others. Religion, for example, seems to have offered women more opportunity for open discussion than might be expected. See Anne Conrad, "Wir verplauderten die Zeit recht angenehm, sprachen von Geistersehen, Ahnungen und dergleichen': Religion als Thema aufklärerischer Geselligkeit," in *Ordnung, Politik, und Geselligkeit*, ed. Weckel et al., 203–26.

22. Rebekka Habermas points out that autobiographies such as Baldinger's short text cannot be read as giving simple documentary evidence about a period because they are inflected by the period, by language, and by genre. See Habermas, "Friderika Baldinger und ihr Männerlob: Geschlechterdebatten der Aufklärung," in *Geschlechterperspektiven: Forschungen zur Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Heide Wunder and Gisela Engel (Königstein, 1998), 242–54. In response to passages such as the one extolling Baldinger's husband, Habermas argues that the autobiography should be understood as being, among other things, in the genre of praises of men, *Männerlob* (246–50). Of course, it is thought provoking to consider why this genre would seem appropriate to women in the Enlightenment orbit.

23. La Vopa, *Grace, Talent, and Merit*, 88, points out that the autobiographies of men from impoverished backgrounds also contain lavish expressions of gratitude toward their patrons, including "a degree of dependence and deference that might offend modern sensitivities," but he does not say that these passages of praise seem to cause the authors then to fall silent about themselves, as is the case with Baldinger.

24. See Dawson, *Contested Quill*, chap. 2, esp. 80–91.

25. Page numbers refer to Melchior Adam Weikard, "*Biographie*" und "*Denkwürdigkeiten*," ed. Franz-Ulrich Jestädt (Fulda, 1988). The translations of Weikard's text are my own.

26. See Dawson, *Contested Quill*, 75–77, 147.

27. Because mothers might be especially aware of the difficult lives of unmarried women (Frevert, *Women in German History*, 42), the topos of motherly anxiety could represent care rather than resentment.

28. Both are cited at length in Niemeyer, "Ausschluss oder Ausgrenzung?" 280–81, 290–92. Erxleben's work was published in 1742 and 1749.

29. Cries of alarm were already being heard about the excess of university students when only men could study; see, for example, La Vopa, *Grace, Talent, and Merit*, 230.

30. See also Crampe-Casnabet, "Sampling," 328–39.

31. Honegger, *Ordnung der Geschlechter*, 13–19.

32. Marion W. Gray, *Productive Men, Reproductive Women: The Agrarian Household and the Emergence of Separate Spheres in the German Enlightenment* (New York, 2000), 164.

33. Gaby Pailer, "Luise Adelgunde Victoria Gottsched in der biographischen Konstruktion," *Studia Germanica Gedanensia* 5 (1998): 48–55.

34. Honegger, *Ordnung der Geschlechter*, 69, cites an example from Knigge.

35. Niemeier, "Ausschluss oder Ausgrenzung?" 280–93.
36. Not until Hippel did the notion of women entering the professions receive serious mention again. Amalia Holst, writing in 1802, alludes to the problem of men's monopoly on good positions ("alle einträglichen Ämter und Gewerbe") but does not propose any change (quoted in Birgit Wägenbaur, *Die Pathologie der Liebe: Literarische Weiblichkeitsentwürfe um 1800* [Munich, 1996], 48).
37. Émile Durkheim cited in Judith Grant, *Fundamental Feminism: Contesting the Core Concepts of Feminist Theory* (New York, 1993), 163–64.
38. Ulrike Weckel, "Der Fieberfrost des Freiherrn: Zur Polemik gegen weibliche Gelehrsamkeit und ihren Folgen für die Geselligkeit der Geschlechter," in *Geschichte*, ed. Kleinau and Opitz, 360–72.
39. Goodman, *Amazons and Apprentices*, 196–224, shows several indications that Luise Gottsched's published works deviated from her husband's concepts, but J. C. Gottsched's claims to unanimity have generally prevailed in scholarship. Pailer, "Luise Adelgunde Viktoria Gottsched," also portrays Luise Gottsched as a far more independent person than her husband's representation suggests. Fascinating here is that one of the premier exponents of egalitarian gender relations so systematically depicted his wife as his creation and his assistant. Until Dorothea Runkel published her friend's letters beginning in 1771, this diminishing depiction of her prevailed. Goodman sees Luise Gottsched positioning herself as an "apprentice" to her husband, the scholarly master.
40. Conrad, "Wir verplauderten," 209–13.
41. Tolkemitt, "Knotenpunkte," 184–85.
42. *Ibid.*, 186–88.
43. Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, 1996).
44. At the same time, the *Empfindsamkeit*, as Weckel, "Der Fieberfrost," 364, points out, posits a stark conflict for women between virtue and intellect.
45. Zäunemann, Ziegler, and Reiske are discussed in Goodman, *Amazons and Apprentices*. For Elise Reimarus, see Tolkemitt, "Knotenpunkte," 175–86.
46. Lovisa Ulrika (1720–82), for example, who married the heir to the Swedish throne and became queen of Sweden, was remarkable as a patron of literature, art, and science; see Merit Laine, "An Eighteenth-Century Minerva: Lovisa Ulrika and Her Collections at Drottningholm Palace 1744–1777," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31 (1998): 493–503. Another of Friedrich's sisters, Wilhelmine of Bayreuth, wrote an opera that is briefly discussed in Ruth P. Dawson, "Frauen und Theater: Vom Stegreifspiel zum bürgerlichen Rührstück," in *Deutsche Literatur von Frauen*, ed. Gisela Brinker-Gabler (Munich, 1988), 1:424.
47. Carl Wilhelm Otto August von Schindel. *Die deutschen Schriftstellerinnen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1823), 1:365.
48. Honegger, *Ordnung der Geschlechter*, 168–99.