



**Gabriele and Elsa Porges as children**

*(Courtesy of Dan Stobr, Chicago)*

# From Fin-de-Siècle to Theresienstadt

The Works and Life of the Writer  
Elsa Porges-Bernstein

*Edited by*  
Helga W. Kraft  
& Dagmar C. G. Lorenz



PETER LANG

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# Daughter and Sister

## Family Structure in the Work of Elsa Bernstein

*Gertrud Roesch*

### Basic Facts on Sister Relationships

The question of sibling relationships in literature—and especially those between sisters—belongs both to the psychology of literature and to social literary history. It implies considering the text as a twofold medium. It is understood to convey the writer's autobiographical experiences which, firstly, become part of the meaning and, secondly, gives the author the chance to express or even to come to terms with his/her experiences in the process of writing them down. Thus, a text becomes a kind of a "Probehandeln" ("trial run")<sup>1</sup> for both the writer and reader, during which situations are rehearsed as if they were happening in reality. At the same time, these autobiographical experiences are always related to a range of literary strategies among which the narrative perspective, the literary genre, and the motif tradition are the most prominent. Simultaneously, these literary strategies guarantee that a text is related to both the time and the society of its origin. It thus surpasses the realm of autobiographical expression and becomes an artefact, i.e. a work of art that exists in its own right.<sup>2</sup> It can be analyzed aesthetically as well as historically, but it is no longer confined to its autobiographical origin.

The relationship between sisters represents a constant anthropological factor as such relationships can be traced back to major texts of ancient literature. Their conceptualization in a special work of art ("Artefakt," which here always means "text") depends on central historical and mental concepts that were pre-

sent during the literary epoch in which they were produced. Sibling relationships in the eighteenth century are preferably depicted as harmonious in order to prove the viability of ideals such as virtue and humanity. During the nineteenth century, however, the sister relationship no longer focuses on balance between the characters, but becomes polarized in the same way as the female-male relationship becomes antagonistic. Sisters are in turn more often shown as rivals who follow the dichotomies of female and male gender patterns. At the turn of the century, medicine and psychology contributed research in order to naturalize the social construct of gender difference and convey it as an unalterable "natural" fact.<sup>3</sup>

The issues of gender conceptualization and family relationships in history form the context for the following analysis of the life and work of the authoress Elsa Bernstein (1866–1949). Elsa was the oldest daughter of Heinrich Porges (1837–1900), a famous conductor and admirer of Richard Wagner. His family belonged to the *Großbürgertum* (upper class), a class in which Elsa remained after her marriage to the lawyer Max Bernstein in 1890.<sup>4</sup> She had a younger sister, Gabriele Porges (1868–1942), who lived with her in Munich following the death of Elsa's husband Max in 1925.<sup>5</sup>

In order to understand the implications of her twofold role as the eldest daughter—she calls herself a *Vatertochter* ("daddy's girl")<sup>6</sup>—and as elder sister, basic concepts of sibling research need to be taken into account. Among these concepts, the rank and age difference of siblings are central for family structure and behavioral patterns of brothers and sisters.

These patterns were first singled out by Alfred Adler<sup>7</sup> in his book *Menschenkenntnis* (1927, *Understanding Human Nature*, 1927). Ever since its publication it has been the focus of interdisciplinary research. Adler identifies five positions within the succession of siblings that have an impact on behavior later in life: the only child; the eldest, the second-born, the youngest, and the one in the "sandwich" position. Although he only refers to the male gender, these categories have since then been used for females too. The rather rigid typology is influenced and altered by factors such as age difference and familial incidents, e.g. parental separation or death of one or the other parent.

In his empirical research, Frank Sulloway, the American historian and psychologist, established slightly different patterns: his main issue is the role of younger brothers and sisters in relation to their elder counterparts. The eldest sibling is, according to him, most likely to take their parents' side as far as values are concerned; they are likely to support their parents and dominate their younger brothers and sisters. Second-born children, on the other hand, tend to distinguish themselves as rebels or reformers.<sup>8</sup> Sulloway proposes that the age position within the sibling row influences both sisters and brothers alike, and, as a result, both genders display similar behavioral patterns regardless of their sex.<sup>9</sup>

The Porges sisters had no other siblings, and this, according to Sulloway, was evident in their behavioral patterns. On the one hand, the elder sister tends to develop a closer relationship with her father than with anyone else, whereas her younger sister tends to take the mother's side. Therefore, the elder of two sisters is more likely to become a rebel than her younger companion who is inclined to become a conformist, thus resulting in the opposite scenario to what Sulloway assumes. In the case of two brothers, Sulloway was able to prove the exact opposite. When comparing Sulloway's results to critical research in the wake of Adler, the following patterns emerge: In a group of siblings, the elder or eldest child is most likely to be supported by her parents; he/she will use that privileged position to gain and to maintain their parents' love. Thus he/she becomes a powerful rival to the younger sister or brother who is competing for their parents' attention and love as well; alas, the younger has to prevail against the benchmarks set by the elder and thus might be tempted to give up. Whilst at the same time, he/she is likely to become the *Nesthäkchen* ("baby of the family") and is treated with more indulgence by their parents.

These psychological and sociological concepts can be specified particularly for sisters: Elder sisters are more altruistic and support solidarity and sensibility to a greater extent than elder brothers. Rivalry between sisters can be solved in two different ways. The younger may try to become different from the elder one; this process of differentiation leads to "dissimilar sisters", as we know them from history, literature, and today's mass media (e.g. the British Queen Elizabeth and her late sister Princess Margaret). But the younger sister can also try to become similar to her elder sister so that both women remain in close contact throughout their lives; thus they become "inseparable sisters". Both constellations result from a more or less conscious decision on the part of the two women. The decision, though, to become a closely knit pair of women may stem from strong social and financial reasons. When talking about sister relationships, one needs to differentiate between the biological and the emotional aspects. The biological fact that two women have the same parents will henceforth be referred to as "sisterhood"; it implies a vertical resp. hierarchical relationship between parent and child as well as a horizontal one between the female children. In contrast, "sisterliness" is based on an emotional bond that two women form of their own free will. Both forms of relationship, the biological and emotional one, may overlap.

How significant was the sister relationship for Elsa Bernstein? Which roles and options did she as the eldest daughter and sister have? What can be surmised as likely reasons for the options she took? Are these familial relationships reflected directly or manifested indirectly in her works? If the latter is the case, important questions on gender issues and existing concepts of sister relationship are highlighted throughout her work.

### Inseparable Sisters

In photographs, Elsa and Gabriele Porges bear a strong resemblance to each other. Both young women seem to have belonged to the blond, girlish type. As Gabriele was an unmarried woman, she was probably restricted both socially and financially, while Elsa, on the contrary, enjoyed a degree of freedom in both aspects, especially after her marriage to the lawyer Max Bernstein in 1890.<sup>10</sup> This marriage and the consequent birth of her children indicate that Elsa fulfilled the expected role of entering into a marriage that matched her social background and then becoming a wife and mother. Her continuous work as a dramatist, however, clearly deviates from that conformist pattern and can be regarded as a move towards emancipation. This was no doubt made easier for her through her husband's commitment as a critic and an expert on theatrical censorship legal proceedings as well as through his tolerant attitude on the emancipation movement, which he even supported in various articles.<sup>11</sup> With regard to this part of her life, Elsa Bernstein appears as a woman who, on the one hand, conforms to the expectations of her class but, on the other, breaks away from these expectations in—in Sulloway's words—a successful attempt at rebellion.

Elsa and Gabriele were obviously "inseparable sisters". Elsa called Gabriele her "talking eye," thus referring to the fact that her own eyesight in later life was severely impaired. Solidarity and support lay at the core of their relationship, culminating in the fact that Elsa did not accept the visa that would have allowed her to leave Germany and enter the United States because it excluded Gabriele. As a result, both sisters were deported to Theresienstadt where Gabriele died just four weeks later. In 1946, Elsa wrote a poem in memory of her dead sister:

That you could disappear. Burnt  
Like a candle of sacrifice on an altar...  
A dark angel took you by his hand,  
and guided you sleeping into an unknown land,  
And all is gone...<sup>12</sup>

The imagery is reminiscent of the opening of Rilke's first *Duineser Elegie*,<sup>13</sup> thus placing the poem in the historic and aesthetic context of turn-of-the-century symbolist and neo-romantic literature. As compelling as these lines may be, their aim is to hide the reality of death by using metaphorical language. The woman is not mentioned by name or represented as a person, but becomes the sacrificial candle; death is euphemistically referred to as a sleeping state brought about by a dark angel. This "dark angel" is not only a personification of death (as the skeleton would be), but has a specific meaning in Judaism, because it is the Angel of Death who accompanies the spirit of the dead to God.<sup>14</sup>

Bernstein has introduced the same imagery in her impressive and compelling drama *Mutter Maria* (1900, Mother Mary). Here, the begging friar is intro-

duced as the Angel of Death guarding the person to die: he has risen, thrown back his hood, the monk's habit falls down, he stands straight as a dark angel.<sup>15</sup> The play, however, bears more than this reminiscence of neo-romantic literature. It focuses on the *Bergschwester* ("mountain sisters"), fairy-like beings, the youngest of whom becomes pregnant and gives birth to a child. The two older sisters—referred to only as the one in the green veil and the other one in the blue veil—remain a twin-like unity against the youngest who is singled out as the rebel because she endeavored something new or different and becomes both the heroine as well as the victim of her own courage. The constellation of two sisters confronting their younger non-conformist sister is familiar; it appears in plays as wide apart as Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *Libussa* (written 1825–1848; first performed in 1874) by the Austrian dramatist Franz Grillparzer. Grillparzer's romantic plays—particularly *Sappho* (written 1817; first performed in 1818), *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (1840), *Hero and Leander*, (1895), first performed in 1831, and *Die Jüdin von Toledo* (written 1851; first performed in 1872 in Prague, *The Jewess of Toledo*, 1913)—were regularly performed at the Vienna Hofburgtheater both during Grillparzer's lifetime and even more so after his death in 1872, and fitted in well with the melancholy streak of neo-romantic literature around the turn of the century.<sup>16</sup> It is, therefore, not in any way far-fetched to link Bernstein's plot to similar motifs in *Libussa* (1872, tr. 1941). In both *Mutter Maria* and *Libussa* the youngest daughter eventually becomes the victim who pays for her encounter with a human man with her own death. That encounter also includes sexual love, which is symbolized in both plays by the girdle around which the two lovers play.

This twin-like unity could possibly have had an ill-effect on the relation between the Porges sisters, Elsa and Gabriele, and hence could have led them into a similar conflict or rivalry caused by the presence of a man. Yet, they obviously opted for solidarity and a close relationship even after Elsa got married to Max Bernstein in 1890. Elsa's husband, however, found himself in the role of a man between two women.<sup>17</sup> Although the constellation of a man between two sisters must have been a crucial part in Elsa's life, it is conspicuously absent from her plays. This calls for a closer look at the relationships between the female characters in her plays in order to decipher their actual significance.

### Sister Relationships in Disguise

Bernstein's play *Dämmerung* (*Twilight*, first performed in 1893) is clearly tinged by the enthusiasm for Wagner Elsa experienced in her parents' house. The heroine is called Isolde. Carl Curtius, a young Wagner enthusiast, adores Isolde and

dreams of them both being united in absolute love like Tristan and Isolde in Wagner's opera.

Isolde's eyesight is severely impaired; she describes her physical illness in exact medical terms, which links this female character autobiographically to Bernstein and her own disability. The illness takes on psychic qualities at the same time as the eyes play a crucial role as symbols for narcissism. Linking narcissism to the eye harks back to romantic literature; it can be studied in the particularly compelling story *Der Sandmann* by E.T.A. Hoffmann.<sup>18</sup> Hoffmann's text also uses spectacles and artificial eyes to symbolize the protagonist's inability to distinguish between his inner world and outside reality, since reality is increasingly distorted by his inner perceptions.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, Isolde projects her inner world onto the world around her so that it becomes a mirror of her soul. This process is symbolized by her eye illness mentioned earlier as well as by a self-portrait that hangs on the wall of the salon, in which she is dressed in an evening gown. Her father explains his daughter's elegant appearance: "My wife introduced her into society relatively early. It was so pretty. They looked like sisters" (*Twilight* 45).<sup>20</sup> Ritter describes the closeness between mother and daughter as a sister relationship (*wie zwei Schwestern*, "like two sisters"). Although this choice of words is intended to deny any erotic overtones in his relationship to his daughter, it nevertheless places Isolde in her own mother's position. Isolde herself even confirms that closeness: "[...] I am the spitting image of my mama" (*Twilight* 75).<sup>21</sup>

The assumed sister-like similarity between mother and daughter, however, exists only on the surface under which a completely different constellation is hidden. The weakness of Isolde's eyes turns out to be the artificial reason for her dependency on her father. The true and inner reason lies in the narcissistic bond between father and daughter, who both refuse to give up the parent-child-unity. In the resulting oedipal triangle, Isolde is both mother and child to her father Ritter. Ritter involuntarily admits to this close unity by drawing attention to the sister-like similarity of mother and daughter. This observation provides him with the only socially accepted way of expressing that he is a man between two women, both of whom he finds sexually attractive even though he must not admit that in the case of his daughter.

A solution comes within reach when Sabine Graef, a young female doctor, appears and offers to cure Isolde's illness. She clearly does not conform to the female roles that Ritter and Carl Curtius have in mind. Neither does she compromise herself by making small talk with Curtius, nor does she answer Isolde, who mocks her more or less discreetly for being a spinster. In short, Sabine Graef is as exceptional on stage as any woman with a profession in the sciences was at that time. Surprisingly, Isolde and Sabine develop a "sisterly" relationship since Isolde, out of her own free will, wants Sabine to stay and continue her



treatment. When the young girl shares intimacies with her older friend, Sabine starts to understand Isolde's psychological state.

ISOLDE: (purses her lips and throws her head back): After all, I am a grown woman. Secrets merely make people curious. You think about it—and it's pleasurable—on a sleepy summer evening—in the soft heat . . . (*She laughs to herself with her eyes half closed, turns her head back into her right arm, and passionately kisses her own left hand.*)

SABINE: (*sorrowfully, only half to Isolde*): That on top of everything else! — Do you know, Miss Isolde, what I'm going to prescribe for you? A cold shower every day, and you'll have to get something to do, an occupation. [ . . . ]

In a sense it is possible that you know more than I do. And what I know wouldn't be good for such an unhealthy attitude—for this teenaged hysteria. (*Twilight* 79–80)<sup>22</sup>

By mentioning hysteria Sabine uses the key concept for describing female fragility and deficiency around the turn of the century. Hysteria at that time was attributed to an unresolved oedipal conflict and also to sexual desires that to Sabine are proven by Isolde's behavior: "passionately kisses her own left hand." Consequently, Sabine suggests physical activity, which was a widely accepted cure; the symptoms seem to follow the insights of psychoanalysis that were just about to emerge around the time when the play was written.<sup>23</sup> Sabine, on the other hand, cannot reduce herself to becoming Isolde's friend and trusted doctor, since Ritter falls in love with her and urges her to become his wife by proposing to her (IV, 112–115). This change of roles is enacted in a direct, physical way when he forcibly grabs her arm and formally leads her out of the room.

Ritter's love for Sabine triggers a narcissistic crisis in Isolde. Undoing her plaits and taking poison, just like the two ill-fated lovers in Wagner's opera, Isolde tries to commit suicide. Her father walks in on that rather opera-like scene and rescues her. He comes to understand how crucial his love for Isolde is, although he is denied insight into the underlying psychological process that is never explicitly mentioned. It is Sabine who offers a "noble" solution:

SABINE: But what do I want? I want nothing from you! Understand me, Heinrich. Nothing. Not your name, not—you! Take me into your house as a nurse—for her. Only let me be here. Only don't be alone. So alone—so absolutely alone—God in Heaven, even if she was your wife, she couldn't refuse me this!

RITTER: She wouldn't refuse you—maybe not—but she would fret herself to death. [ . . . ] I don't love her—as much as I love you. And you love me. She would be superfluous between us (*Twilight* 140–141).<sup>24</sup>

Sabine hints at the unresolved oedipal bond between father and daughter by characterizing Isolde as his would-be wife ("und wenn sie dein Weib wär") to whom she—Sabine—would become a natural rival.

Sabine foregoes marriage and sexual fulfillment, as both put her in the position of being Isolde's rival and would hence force Isolde to repeat the former

rivalry between herself and her mother. By opting to stay as a "nurse", Sabine prefers a "sisterly" position that she chooses of her own free will. However, by choosing this role she forfeits the chance of gaining erotic fulfillment and social respectability as Ritter's wife. Her self-sacrifice fatally fits into the stereotype of sacrifice, asexuality and purity that were part of the female gender role around 1900. At the same time, she aspires to a career as a medical doctor, i.e. a scientist, and refuses to endanger that goal by taking on the duties and social role of a wife and stepmother. By opting for sisterly behavior instead of a sexual relationship, she gains both emotional fulfillment in her relationship with Isolde and freedom to continue her professional career. The decision, therefore, becomes an indirect step towards emancipation.<sup>25</sup>

### Conclusion

When concluding the analysis of the life and dramatic works of Elsa Bernstein, one finds manifold results that are apt to differentiate the types of sibling relationships as described at the beginning of the paper. Elsa und Gabriele Porges were inseparable sisters who supported each other in different ways uncompromisingly. Elsa offered Gabriele the chance to live as part of her family and thus experience warmth and company instead of living on her own. Gabriele in turn offered to stay with Elsa and re-compensate her after Max Bernstein's death. The deep emotional bond between the two sisters reached its climax when they decided not to separate but to remain in Germany and face the threat of deportation and death together. This behavior no doubt shows the willingness to self-sacrifice, which on Elsa's part might have been the result of an almost innate behavioral pattern. As the elder sister, she was prone to take over parental functions, i.e. parental responsibility, and care for her younger sister. Thus, she would have been the victim of belated parentification, as is often the case with elder siblings toward younger ones.<sup>26</sup>

In her play *Twilight* this relationship with her sister appears in a much more clear-cut and disclosing manner than in a direct rendering of her life, i.e. in her autobiography. The biographical constellation—a man situated between two women, whose appearance and character is very alike—is, on the one hand, portrayed as the relationship between mother and daughter and, on the other hand, as the friendship between daughter and a motherly friend. Both constellations imply male sexuality. In the first case, the mother is already deceased, thereby allowing the widowed husband to be erotically attracted to his daughter; in the second case, the father forces a young and independent woman into the role of lover and future wife and arouses the jealousy of his daughter, for whom he feels unresolved love. The catastrophe seems imminent and is only hindered when Sabine decides to take on the sisterly role.

It remains undecided whether this tension between love and sexual unfulfillment, as shown in *Twilight*, also was an element of the *ménage à trois* between Gabriele Porges and Max and Elsa Bernstein. There are not—and cannot be—any autobiographical traces for this assumption, since the limitations of decency and social norm would have prohibited confessions like these. In a fictional text, however, the author can take greater liberties in expressing personal circumstances that otherwise would be compromising. It is that freedom offered by fiction that makes family relationships in *Twilight* worthy of a second look.

## Notes

1. Sigmund Freud, "Formulierungen über zwei Prinzipien psychischen Geschehens," *Gesammelte Werke* vol. 8, ed. Anna Freud (London: Imago, 1940, 4. Aufl. 1964), 230–238. Here: 233. The concept of "Probhandeln" was meant as an answer to the question of how the subconscious and the Lustprinzip (pleasure principle) can be balanced against the pressures of the reality principle. Art, but also mere fantasizing and thinking, attempts to picture reality in advance in order to offer ways of relief and of coping better with reality.
2. "Artefakt" is understood according to Jan Mukarovsky (1891–1975). According to the difference between "*langue*" and "*parole*," Mukarovsky defines a work of art as the material basis, as a sum of literary signifiers that become "Konkretisation" in the mind of the reader. The "Konkretisation" constitutes itself on the basis of the artefact in the mind of the reader.
3. The connection between the conceptualisation of the sister relationship and central ideas concerning gender in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries is investigated in more detail in Roesch (2000) and Onnen-Isemann/Roesch (2005, s. Introduction).
4. The Bernstein Salon is briefly described in Bernstein (1999, 26–29). Among the couple's friends were the publishers Michael Georg Conrad and Georg Hirth, as well as many Munich authors as far apart as Ludwig Ganghofer to Thomas Mann, and also artists such as Lovis Corinth and Franz von Stuck, and the composer Richard Strauss.
5. A picture of Gabriele as well as a description of her much needed presence for Elsa can be found in Bernstein (1999, 25–29).
6. In her autobiographical recollections, she tells Kurt Wiener about her father, see Bernstein 1999, 14f: "I have loved my father deeply [ ... ] the memory of him even more than him as a person." ("Ich habe meinen Vater sehr geliebt [ ... ] den Geist noch mehr als den Menschen.")
7. Alfred Adler (1870–1937) began his career as an eye doctor and then became educated in the field of psychology as one of Sigmund Freud's early students. He developed his own individual psychological direction according to the experiences he had as a military doctor in the First World War. He put a great emphasis on the circumstances of one's life as well as personality traits in his type of psychology. This explains his interest in the family as the individual's most important environment. From 1927 he gave regular lectures on this theme in the USA and then moved to New York in 1934.
8. Sulloway (1997) relies on approximately 10,000 biographies going back 500 years; his data therefore tend to become too general and lack specific insight into historical conditions. Since he uses both European and Anglo-Saxon sources, his general hypotheses can be applied to this paper as well.

9. According to his data, the most significant relationship for girls occurred between sex and the age position in the sibling group; see Sulloway 1997, 161–184 (Chapter 6, "Geschlecht"). In a mixed row of siblings, it is mostly younger sisters who profit from the existence of an elder brother and become non-conformist.
10. Elsa Porges married Max Bernstein (1854–1925) on October 21, 1890. The couple had two children: Eva (1894–1986) and Hans Heinrich (1898–1980). Eva studied to become a violinist and lived in Paris for one year before she married Klaus Hauptmann, son of dramatist Gerhart Hauptmann, in 1919. She survived Nazism and, after 1950, taught at the Hochschule für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Hamburg. Hans emigrated to the US where he altered his name (Bernt-Atkinson). For biographical data on the Porges-Bernstein families see <<http://www.porges.net>>.
11. See Joachimsthaler 1995: 336–341. In 1879 Bernstein published a series of articles about the feminist movement and proposed better education on participation in public life.
12. *Der Schwester* ("To the Sister," written in 1946). In: *An den Wind geschrieben. Lyrik der Freiheit 1933-1945*, ed. Manfred Schlösser, 197: "Daß Du erlöschen konntest! Ausgebrannt / Wie eine Opferkerze am Altar... / Ein schwarzer Engel nahm Dich an der Hand, / Und führte schlafend Dich ins Unbekannt, / Und alles war [ ... ]."
13. "Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel / Ordnungen? [ ... ] Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich." ("Who from the angels" order heard me, when I screamed. [ ... ] Every single angle is horrifying" [685]). ["Duineser Elegien" date to 1912/1922]. [Trans. the editors].
14. 10 Dec 2005 <<http://www.mazornet.com/deathandmourning/Conservativefinal.html>>.
15. "[E]r hat sich erhoben, die Kapuze zurückgestreift, das Mönchsgewand fällt ab, er steht hochaufgerichtet als schwarzer Engel da" (*Mutter Maria* 48, trans. G. Roesch.)
16. On the reception of Grillparzer's play, see Norbert Fuerst, *Grillparzer auf der Bühne*.
17. This pattern is familiar from history; well-known examples include Friedrich Schiller who married Charlotte von Lengefeld, who always remained close to her elder sister Caroline; the novelist Ricarda Huch had a relationship with her sister Lilly's husband Richard; the two lovers even got married in 1907 when the children of Lilly and Richard were grown up, but they split up again in 1912. On the biographies of Charlotte and Caroline von Lengefeld and Ricarda and Lilly Huch see Raabe 42–88, 252–290. Sisters are very often portrayed as living in symbiotic harmony and supporting each other or developing opposite characteristics and life patterns in order to mark their individuality in a row of siblings. A man who stands undecided between two sisters is as much the result of this symbiotic or antagonistic sister relationship as of deficient male psyche. Simultaneous love for two women (often sisters or mother and daughter) can be seen as an attempt to compensate for the gender dichotomy, which becomes increasingly evident during the nineteenth century, and to achieve a more holistic existence. In his Novella *Zwei Schwestern* (1846), the Austrian poet Adalbert Stifter gave a fictional investigation of such an attempt, see Andrea Bartl in Onnen-Isemann/Roesch 153–169. Another striking example is Grillparzer's relationship with Katharina Fröhlich. His doubts about marriage and his admiration for intellectually independent women, as well as his unexpectedly clear insights into the limiting roles of men and women, point toward the same kind of "Androgynicideal" (Lorenz 32) as rendered in Stifter's novella.
18. E.T.A. Hoffmann published *Der Sandmann* as the first text of his collection *Nachtstücke*. It was written in November 1815, but not published until late 1816. The text helped to consolidate Hoffmann's renown as a writer of horror stories ("Schauer geschichten"). Freud's analysis of the text in his essay "The Uncanny" ("Das Unheimliche," 1919) drew attention

to the topic and narrative structure of the text that is now among the most widely read stories of Hoffmann.

19. On the wide range of motifs concerning spectacles and artificial eyes see Kaiser 52–54.
20. "Meine Frau führte sie ziemlich früh ein—in die Gesellschaft. Es war so hübsch. Sie sahen aus wie zwei Schwestern" (I, 44).
21. "[...] ich bin ja der Mama aus dem Gesicht geschnitten" (II, 72).
22. "ISOLDE: (wirft die Lippen auf und den Kopf zurück): Ich bin doch erwachsen. Geheimnisse machen neugierig. Man denkt darüber—and es ist angenehm—so ein schläfriger Sommerabend—in der weichen Hitze . . . (lacht mit halbgeschlossenen Augen vor sich hin, biegt den Kopf in den rechten Arm zurück und küßt sich leidenschaftlich auf die linke Hand).  
SABINE: (schmerzlich, nur halb zu Isolde): Das auch noch!—Wissen Sie Fräulein Isolde, was ich Ihnen verschreiben werde? Alle Tage eine kalte Douche und etwas zu thun müssen Sie bekommen, Beschäftigung. [...] In einem Sinn könnte es sein, daß Sie mehr wissen als ich. Und was ich weiß, das paßt nicht für ein ungesundes Gefühl—für diese halbwüchsige Hysterie." (II, 76)
23. Right after the appearance of *Studien zur Hysterie* (1920, *Studies in Hysteria*, 1950), hysteria was understood as a form of psychoneurosis caused by an unsolved oedipal conflict that was responsible for the various physical symptoms. See Breuer/Freud 12.
24. "SABINE: Aber was will ich denn? Nichts von dir! Begreif' mich, Heinrich. Nichts. Nicht deinen Namen, nicht—dich! Nimm mich als Pflegerin ins Haus—für sie. So verlassen—so grenzenlos verlassen—Gott im Himmel, und wenn sie dein Weib wär', so könnt' sie mir doch das nicht verweigern!  
RITTER: Sie wird es auch nicht—vielleicht nicht—aber sie wird sich tot kränken. [...] So lieb wie dich—hab' ich sie nicht. Und du liebst mich. Sie ist zwischen uns ein Zuviel" (V, 135).
25. Astrid Weigert takes a different view on that. In her 1999 paper, she stresses the difference between old and new as symbolized in Ritter's music and his success that lies in the past; his aesthetics as well as his personal behaviour are coined as old-fashioned. Sabine's appearance as well as her profession indicate that she prefers science and the rational attitude. Art and science also represented opposites in Naturalist aesthetics which aimed for, *Verwissenschaftlichung der Kunst* (applying scientific measures to literature); by refusing a union of the two protagonists who are meant to incorporate the two alternatives, Bernstein rejects a central concept of Naturalist aesthetics and even includes this rejection in a Naturalist play. In Weigert's view, the gender conflict symbolizes the aesthetic discourse; see Weigert.
26. An even more far-reaching example of taking over the parental function can be seen in the life of Gertrud (Chodziesner) Kolmar (1894–1943); her deep bond with her father made her stay in Germany while her sister Hilde Wenzel, together with her daughter Sabine, fled to Switzerland; see Woltmann.

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