

The University of Manitoba

SOPHIE VON LAROCHE : GESCHICHTE DES FRÄULEIN VON STERNHEIM
CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NOVEL AND ITS CRITICISM

by
Ursula Harlos

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts

Department of German

Winnipeg, Manitoba
March, 1984

SOPHIE VON LAROCHE : GESCHICHTE DES FRAULEIN VON STERNHEIM

CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NOVEL AND ITS CRITICISM

by

Ursula Trudi Harlos

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

✓
© 1984

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVER-
SITY OF MANITOBA to lend or sell copies of this thesis. to
the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this
thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and UNIVERSITY
MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this thesis.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the
thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or other-
wise reproduced without the author's written permission.

i

SOPHIE VON LAROCHE : GESCHICHTE DES FRÄULEIN VON STERNHEIM
CONTRADICTIONS IN THE NOVEL AND ITS CRITICISM

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the contradictions in Sophie von LaRoche's first novel. Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim, and in its criticism. The discussion is divided into two main parts. The first part deals with the novel itself. In order to crystallize its contrasting elements, the concepts rational, irrational and "empfindsam" are applied to three main areas: the author's motives in writing the novel, three individual characters and the themes nature, education, love-marriage, social issues and metaphysics. Analysis of these elements exposes LaRoche's novel as a work of contradictions in which opposing views, rational and irrational, exist side by side.

The second part of the thesis deals with the contradictions in the novel's criticism. It begins with an examination of the contemporary reviews and follows the main criticism through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, right up to the present day. The critics' opinions are studied with respect to their specific focus in analyzing the novel in an attempt to find out how it is generally perceived. This examination reveals a development in the criticism. While the early critics focus on a single quality, whether rational, irrational or

"empfindsam", the later critics regard the novel as a unified representation of the "Aufklärung" world. This look at the critics also reveals a development in the novel's popularity, from an initial, overwhelming but short-lived success to an almost total oblivion with a few intermittent spurts of recognition in between.

In concluding, it is evident that the contradictions in the criticism are a direct reflection of the novel's content. The diverse qualities within LaRoche's work attract a diverse audience. Opinions of the novel and its content change not only according to individual tastes but according to how the "Aufklärung" is perceived at a particular time.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
NOVEL OVERVIEW.....	7
 CHAPTER 1 :DISCUSSION OF THE NOVEL	
1.1 :Motives of Author.....	11
1.2 :Individual Characters.....	18
1.2.1 :Lord Derby.....	18
1.2.2 :Lord Seymour.....	23
1.2.3 :Fräulein von Sternheim.....	28
1.3 :Themes.....	42
1.3.1 :Nature.....	42
1.3.2 :Education.....	50
1.3.3 :Love-Marriage.....	59
1.3.4 :Social Issues.....	70
1.3.5 :Metaphysics.....	79
 CHAPTER 2 :DISCUSSION OF THE CRITICS (1771-1982)	
2.1 :Contemporary Reviews (1771-1775)....	85
2.2 :Kuno Ridderhoff (1895, 1907).....	105
2.3 :Wilhelm Spickernagel (1911).....	117
2.4 :Christine Touaillon (1919).....	130
2.5 :Fritz Brüggemann (1938).....	142
2.6 :Modern Critics (1964-1982).....	149
 SUMMARY.....	162
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	167

INTRODUCTION

Sophie von LaRoche's first novel, Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim, embodies a world of contradictions. It does not appear to present a one-sided view of the world. Classification of the novel becomes more difficult since its content is not the exclusive property of any one particular literary genre. Werner Milch attempts to crystallize the ambivalent atmosphere in LaRoche's work: " 'Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim' steht an der Grenze zwischen Aufklärung und empfindsamer Schwärmerei. Darum konnte der Roman noch dem praktischen, vernunftklaren La Roche gefallen, der die Doktrin, den Kampf für Besserung der Lebensschicksale niederer Stände, das Eintreten für eine würdige Erziehung junger Mädchen aus dem Buche herauslas; er konnte Wieland gefallen, da hier in seinem Sinne statt starrer Typen seelische Vorgänge dargestellt wurden; er konnte den jungen Schwärmern gefallen, den Jünglingen, die sich in die Gestalt Seymours hineinträumten, und den Mädchen, für die Sophie Sternheim ein Idealbild wurde - edel zu sein und zu handeln auch im tiefsten Unglück."¹

The above passage mirrors a picture of two contrasting worlds. Adolf Bach has his own ideas about how these worlds should be categorized. He not only identifies the conflicts

¹Werner Milch, Sophie LaRoche. Die Großmutter der Brentanos, (Frankfurt a.M.: Societätsverlag, 1935), p. 91, hereafter cited as Milch.

within the work but within the author herself: "Sicherlich war die LaRoche literarisch wie menschlich eine unausgeglichene Erscheinung: Schwankend zwischen Rationalismus und Empfindsamkeit;"²

The aim of this thesis is not to attach LaRoche's novel, as Milch and Bach have done, to a specific literary movement, whether "Aufklärung", "Rationalismus", "Empfindsame Schwärmerei" or "Empfindsamkeit". Instead, the content of Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim will be examined in the first part of this discussion according to its contradictory elements. These elements will be labelled rational and irrational, respectively.

For the purpose of this thesis, the following definitions will serve as a basis for defining the novel's opposing qualities. The term rational represents an allegiance to reason and its recognition as the principal authority in determining the individual's ideas and actions. It implies a general, objective element which is fairly rigid in its expression.

The term irrational represents an alternate view. It stands for individual, personal attributes which exist in a subjective, relative framework. To be irrational means to give way to one's senses. It suggests heightened

²Adolf Bach, "Sophie LaRoche und ihre Stellung im deutschen Geistesleben des 18. Jhdts.," in : Zeitschrift für den deutschen Unterricht, (1926), bd. 40, p. 180, hereafter cited as Bach.

feelings and intuition and is therefore linked to the term "empfindsam" which represents a world motivated by emotion.

A general summation of these two contradictory terms is as follows: rational refers to a general external order and irrational or "empfindsam" to a personal, internal experience. The first term is linked to a more conventional, traditional quality in this thesis, while the second two are regarded as more original and therefore progressive.

In order to expose the novel's ambivalent atmosphere, the above terms are applied to an examination of three separate areas. LaRoche's motives in writing the novel, the three main characters: Lord Derby, Lord Seymour and Fräulein von Sternheim, and the themes nature, education, love-marriage, social issues and metaphysics, are all subject to an analysis of their rational, irrational or "empfindsam" content.

Not only is LaRoche's novel permeated with contradictions but the novel's criticism itself reflects contradictory opinions. From the time of its publication in 1771 until the present day, it has attracted varying reactions from different groups. It seems that since its popular beginning that critics have greatly diverging opinions of the novel; they perceive its content differently. This fact is illustrated in the many classifications it receives.

The controversial reaction initiated by the novel, appears to be related to two main factors: the ambivalent nature of the author as reflected in her work, and the

time period in which the novel is written and published. Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim mirrors both the personality of its author and the character of its age.

Sophie von LaRoche's heritage reflects a combination of diverse elements. She has a rational father and an "empfindsam" mother. Adolph Bach relates the author's personality not only to these antithetical tendencies in her parents but to her environment: "Die Natur hatte der 1731 geborenen einen klaren Verstand, ein starkes Bildungsbedürfnis gegeben und ein empfindsames Herz, und die planvolle Erziehung durch einen gelehrten Vater, eine schwärmerische Mutter und die Zufälligkeiten des Lebens hatten diese Anlagen nicht verkümmern lassen."³ These influences shape both her character and her writing.

LaRoche begins the writing of Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim in 1766, although at this time she has no intentions of writing a novel, especially not one for publication. It is with Wieland's encouragement that she approaches the novel form and it is he who finally suggests its publication in 1771 and 1772.

The novel is born into a unique period in German literary history. It is an age of transition permeated by contradictions and confrontations between various movements. Ludmilla Assing describes the background of this time frame: "Es war eine seltsame Zeit damals in Deutschland.

³Bach, p. 177.

seit Beendigung des siebenjährigen Krieges waltete ein wohlthuender Frieden, und die Theilnahme für die inneren Entwicklungen gewann überall die Oberhand. Hatte bisher die französische Bildung und Literatur geherrscht, so war es nun die deutsche, die einen früher nie geahnten Aufschwung nahm. Friedrichs des Großen freisinnige Regierung verbreitete Licht und Aufklärung in Nähe und Ferne, die verschiedensten Kräfte und Bestrebungen fanden einen freien, ungehemmten Spielraum. Die Gemüther waren in begeisterter Erregung, und gaben sich freudig den Einflüssen der Poesie hin, die Gleichfühlenden und Gleichdenkenden schlossen sich mit Wärme und Innigkeit auseinander; es entstand damals ein wahrer Kultus der Freundschaft und der Zusammengehörigkeit, der zu den höchsten und edelsten Zielen anfeuerte."⁴

LaRoche's novel reflects the spirit of its age. Its contrasting elements, products of both subconscious and conscious factors, mirror the odd juxtaposition of ideas and feelings floating in the German literary atmosphere. Also, because the prevailing trends promoted a national consciousness, LaRoche's writing stood a better chance of recognition at that particular time. consequently, when the novel is finally published, its immediate audience is ready to receive it with open arms. Milch explains the

⁴Ludmilla Assing, Sophie LaRoche; die Freundin Wielands, (Berlin : 1859), p. 150.

novel's singular achievement in gaining a wide popularity in this age of transition: "der Kampf zwischen der Aufklärung und dem jungen 'Sturm und Drang' war 1771 bereits in vollem Gange, und es war kaum möglich, den einen zu Gefallen zu schreiben, ohne den anderen wehe zu tun. Aber in Sophies Roman mischte sich überkommenes Bildungsgut so sehr mit den Ideen der neuen Zeit, daß jeder sich sein Teil herauslesen konnte: hier hatte jemand fernab von den literarischen Streitigkeiten des Tages und ohne Rücksicht auf das Hinundher der weltanschaulichen Kämpfe ein persönliches Bekenntnis abgelegt;"⁵

The second part of the thesis will look at the history of the novel's criticism from the time of its publication up to the present. The discussion will follow a development which serves to highlight the novel's contradictory reception by not only its contemporaries but by the later and modern critics. It will attempt to illustrate the various ways the novel is perceived, specifically with regard to the three areas examined in the first chapter of the thesis.

The title of the novel will be cited hereafter simply as Sternheim. All future page references to LaRoche's work will be included in the body of the thesis. In addition, the heroine's full name, Fräulein von Sternheim, will be shortened to Sternheim.

⁵Milch, pp. 77-78.

NOVEL OVERVIEW

Sophie von Sternheim is the product of a mixed marriage. Her German father, a member of the middle-class is given a noble title because of distinguished military service while her English mother is born into an aristocratic family.

Since both her parents die young, Sternheim is sent to live with her aunt, Gräfin Lobau, the sister of her mother. But before she does so, she decides to spend a year of mourning with her parson and his family.

When the year is over, Sternheim leaves her quiet country lifestyle and is obliged to attend the society of the princely court. Unknowingly, she is designated by her aunt and uncle as future mistress of the prince. This is part of a plot her aunt has organized to win the prince's favour.

Sternheim is unhappy with the artificial existence she is forced to lead at court. However, she is delighted on meeting two Englishmen, Lord Seymour and Lord Derby and appears to fall in love with the former. While both these men feel passionate love for the heroine, only Lord Derby makes his feelings known to her. He also goes about scheming to win her affection in devious ways.

Lord Seymour suffers deeply on learning Sternheim's designated role and he soon comes to believe that she knowingly takes part in her aunt and uncle's scheme. At the prince's masquerade ball he suddenly confronts her and

accuses her of low moral conduct. It is only now that her eyes are opened to the shameful plan in which she had unsuspectingly participated. Feeling abused, shamed and bewildered by this sudden realization, she flees the court and isolates herself in a country house.

Lord Derby takes advantage of Sternheim's embarrassing situation and proposes marriage to her as a means of saving her reputation. Secretly however, he is motivated by selfish desires and does not intend to really marry her. When she does consent to his offer, he has his servant act as justice of the peace and they "marry".

Their new home is in England but all is not well here. Sternheim is subdued and cool towards her "husband" although she knows and believes he saved her from scandal. Lord Derby grows more frustrated by the lack of passion in her and begins to detect her constant feelings for Lord Seymour. His jealousy leads him to heartlessly expose their false marriage and then to leave her.

She suffers deeply and appears near death as her physical and emotional health deteriorates. Finally she decides to change her name to Madam Leidens and to start a new life with the aim of educating and helping the unfortunate. She meets Madam Hills and becomes involved in managing a school for lower-class girls.

At a resort spa, Sternheim meets Lady Summers who invites her to live with her at Summerhill estate. Here she meets Lord Rich, who becomes another suitor. She

develops a deep respect for him but not the same overpowering emotions which she still feels for Lord Seymour. Their relationship is cut short when Lord Derby once again enters the picture. He has since been engaged to Lady Summers' niece. His servant, the same one who "married" him and Sternheim, recognizes Sternheim while delivering a letter to Summerhill estate. Out of fear that she might expose his master to Lady Summers, he kidnaps her and takes her to a deserted Scottish mining town.

In this desolate environment, Sternheim hovers near death. Her mood fluctuates between despair and hope until Derby once again enters her life. He sends his servant to offer her the opportunity to rejoin him in England as he is no longer interested in his new wife. Her refusal angers Derby's servant and he throws her violently into an old deserted tower, leaving her to die.

The poverty-stricken family which had taken care of her in the mining town, finds her and secretly brings her to the estate of Lady Douglas to recuperate. However, they tell Derby's servant that they had found her dead.

In the meantime, Derby has fallen into poor health and his dying days fill him with remorse. His last wish, which he expresses to Rich and Seymour, is to give Sternheim a proper burial. These two brothers have since discovered the past schemes in which Derby had destroyed Sternheim's happiness. They go to Scotland in the hope of finding her body.

Once she is found alive and well, Derby dies and the rest are jubilant in their reunion. Now Sternheim discovers Rich and Seymour are brothers and she must choose between them for a marriage partner. Rich steps back and transforms his love for her into friendship. Sternheim's deep feelings for Seymour clearly indicate her preference and they are soon married. All ends well as Rich is invited to live with the newlyweds and he later becomes a guardian to their second son, Rich.

CHAPTER 1 : DISCUSSION OF THE NOVEL

1.1 Motives of Author

A close examination of Sophie von LaRoche's personal motives in the writing of Sternheim reveals the presence of two opposing factors. The subjective "empfindsam" element exists alongside the rational didactic one and there seems to be a development from the first to the second. These two qualities set the stage for the birth of this, LaRoche's first novel.

It appears that LaRoche initially begins to write for personal reasons. She deeply feels the absence of her two daughters as they leave her to continue their education in Strassburg. This loss triggers a source of melancholy feelings. In her own words, LaRoche describes the germination of these emotions and the ensuing circumstances which prompt her to write: "'Meinerster Versuch, die Geschichte des Fräulein, ist die Frucht des größten Unmuths, welchen ich damals empfinden konnte. Ich trennte mich ungern von meinen beiden Töchtern, welch durch Zwang der Umstände in Straßburg bei St. Barbara erzogen wurden, und ich sprach öfters darüber in einem Ton voll Trauer mit meinem zu früh verstorbenen Freunde Brechter, Prediger in Schwaigern bei Heilbronn . . . Dieser Mann sagte mir einst: Sie jammern mich! Ihre lebhaftete Seele windet sich immer um diesen Gegenstand. Dies ist nicht gut; denn am Ende könnte wohl Ihr Geist und Charakter dabei verlieren. Wissen Sie was; bringen Sie alles, was Sie mir von Zeit zu Zeit zu Ihrer Erleichterung mündlich sagen, so wie Ihre Ideen sich folgen,

genau zu Papier. Sie werden den Vorthail davon haben, Ihrem Kopf auszuleeren; . . . "¹ Her words "größten Unmuths.", "empfinden", "Ton voll Trauer" reflect the heightened feelings which she experiences.

Her use of the term "Versuch" indicates the absence of a serious literary aim in her writing. She begins with notes, in the form of a journal, as her goal is not the writing of a novel but the stabilizing of her inner being. The writing experience becomes cathartic for her. In a letter to Wieland she refers to the content of her writing as "Betrachtungen, welche sich in meiner Seele, wenn sie lebhaft gerührt ist, zu entwickeln pflegen".² She further emphasizes her "empfindsam" motive in explaining the reason of her writing as "dieser Gemütserholung zu widmen."³

As her writing has a personal focus, LaRoche writes when the spirit moves her. She has no rigid schedule to follow, only the overwhelming inner need to bare her soul.

¹Werner Milch, Sophie LaRoche. Die Großmutter der Brentanos, (Frankfurt a.M.: Societätsverlag, 1935), p. 81, hereafter cited as Milch.

²C.M. Wieland, "Vorrede des Herausgebers der Erstausgabe, Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim," in: Deutsche Literatur. Sammlung literarischer Kunst- und Kulturdenkmäler in Entwicklungsreihen, (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam jun., 1938) bd. 14, p. 19, hereafter cited as Wieland, "Vorrede".

³Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 19.

she tells Wieland, "Ich hatte Stunden, wo diese Beschäftigung eine Art von Bedürfnis für meine Seele war. So entstand unvermerkt dieses kleine Werk, welches ich anfang und fortsetzte, ohne zu wissen, ob ich es würde zum Ende bringen können;"⁴

The result of LaRoche's "empfindsam" motive is a novel permeated with an "empfindsam" tone. The author herself acknowledges this subjective basis in a reflection on her writing. She confesses, "Der Grund meiner Seele war voll Trauer; einsame Spaziergänge in einer lieblichen Gegend gossen sanfte Wehmuth dazu, und daraus entstand der gefühlvolle Ton, welcher in dieser Geschichte herrschte."⁵

It is evident that LaRoche begins to write out of a personal subconscious need, brought about by a negative situation. She has no control over this subjective element. Her emotions and Brechter's advice motivate her to initiate a kind of diary for which she has no greater ambitions. However the situation is not strictly one-sided or clear-cut. A rational element intentionally and consciously enters the picture and subsequently influences not only the content but the direction of her writing.

⁴Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 20.

⁵Kuno Ridderhoff, "Einleitung zum Nachdruck von Sophie von LaRoche, Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim," in: Deutsche Literaturdenkmale (Berlin: 1907), bd. 138, p. VIII, hereafter cited as Ridderhoff, "Einleitung".

Although LaRoche senses the urgency of her need to put her thoughts and feelings onto paper, she searches for a logical reason to justify it. She is obviously concerned with the opinion of her husband, Georg Michael LaRoche, a man ruled by strictly rational principles. The following words reflect her concern: "'Das Ganze-des Planes von Brechter-gefiel mir; aber die Betrachtung kam nach : was wird dein guter Mann sagen, wenn er dich so viel schreiben sähe und einmal ein solches Blättchen fände?"⁶

To find a solution, LaRoche introduces a rational didactic motive into her writing. She reasons that since her daughters are no longer present and under her care and supervision, she will invent an imaginary daughter to take their place. She intends to build her writing around the education of this fictitious child, thereby feeling justified in her creative urge. She describes the rational framework in which she places her desire to write and its deliberate origin: "Doch ich wollte nun einmal ein papiernes Mädchen erziehen, weil ich meine eigenen nicht mehr hatte, und da half mir meine Einbildungskraft aus der Verlegenheit und schuf den Plan zu Sophiens Geschichte."⁷

LaRoche appears to adopt a more serious tone towards her writing once a rational goal has been introduced. Now her emotional need to write is accompanied by a rational

⁶Milch, p. 82.

⁷Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. VIII.

desire to educate. The personal element is accompanied by an objective goal, for LaRoche would like to do something useful. Her aim is to illustrate the ultimate importance of principled behaviour. She explains this rational objective in her own words: "Da ich nun darin die Grundsätze meiner eigenen Erziehung zeigen wollte, suchte ich zu beweisen: Dass, wenn das Schicksal uns auch alles nähme, was mit dem Gepräge des Glücks, der Vorzüge und des Vergnügens bezeichnet ist: wir in einem mit nützlicher Kenntniss angebauten Geiste, in tugendhaften Grundsätzen des Herzens und in wohlwollender Nächstenliebe die grössten Hülfquellen finden würden."⁸

LaRoche still does not intend to write a work for publication. Her rational desire to be useful is extended to her family and to Wieland's. She writes, "Aber es ist nur für Sie und mich-und, wenn Sie, wie ich hoffe, die Art zu denken und zu handeln dieser Tochter meines Geistes gutheißen, für unsre Kinder bestimmt."⁹ LaRoche expresses the hope of motivating these children to emulate the virtuous qualities she extols: "Wenn diese durch ihre Bekanntschaft mit jener in tugendhaften Gesinnungen, in einer wahren, allgemeinen, tätigen Güte und Rechtschaffenheit gestärket würden - welche Wollust für das Herz Ihrer

⁸Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. VIII.

⁹Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 20.

Freundin."¹⁰

It is Wieland who is responsible for the progression of LaRoche's writing to the novel form. He perceives her writing as indicative of the rational aim she professes and encourages her to continue. She relies on him for technical advice. On completing her story, she sends it to Wieland, but only for personal approval. Wieland admits "Sie vertrauten mir unter den Rosen der Freundschaft ein Werk Ihrer Einbildungskraft und Ihres Herzens an welches bloß zu Ihrer eigenen Unterhaltung aufgesetzt worden war."¹¹

However Wieland takes it upon himself to be not only her friend, but her editor. He acts on "der Gedanke, Sie in eine Schriftstellerin zu verwandeln".¹² His reason for publishing her work is a rational intention to educate both LaRoche's intended familiar readership and all the young men and women in Germany. He finds enough didactic content in the novel not only to warrant its publication, but to make him unable to resist it. He claims "da ich dem Verlangen nicht widerstehen konnte, allen tugendhaften Müttern, allen liebenswürdigen jungen Töchtern unsrer Nation ein Geschenke mit einem Werke zu machen, welches mir geschickt schien, Weisheit und Tugend-- . . . --unter Ihrem Geschlechte, und selbst unter dem meinigen, zu

¹⁰Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 20.

¹¹Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 19.

¹²Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 20.

befördern."¹³

LaRoche's first novel gravitates from an innocent attempt as a personal diary to a more serious realization in a published novel form. The initial "empfindsam" situation of the heroine is accompanied by a rational intention to educate. The result of these two conflicting motives is a novel of contrasting elements; the rational and the irrational. The content of the novel is a reflection of the author's motivation of "empfinden" as well as her aim of "beweisen", where her "Seele . . . voll Trauer!" works alongside her "tugendhaften Grundsätzen".

¹³ Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 20.

1.2 Individual Characters

Sophie von LaRoche's portrayal of the three main characters, Lord Derby, Lord Seymour and Fräulein von Sternheim, reflects both her rational motivation in writing the novel and her "empfindsam" nature. Each of these characters incorporates one or both of these contrasting tendencies; the rational and/or the "empfindsam". The rational presentation of Derby is contrasted to the "empfindsam" emphasis in Seymour's character. The heroine herself possesses qualities from both of these two conflicting worlds. The following discussion will attempt to show the degree to which these qualities are applied in LaRoche's characterization of these main figures.

1.2.1 Lord Derby

Lord Derby is one of the heroine's main suitors. LaRoche presents him as the villain stereotype in a straightforward, unproblematic manner, thereby constructing an unrealistic character portrait. Derby serves a rational function, i.e. to demonstrate a bad example, and his character is molded according to rational guidelines.

Wieland is the teacher who attempts to guide his former sweetheart in writing technique. Ridderhoff exposes his influence on LaRoche's characterization of Derby. He writes; "In den letzten Monaten des Jahres 1769 und im Jahre 1770 hat sie die Briefe Derbys, des 'Bösewichts', geschrieben, auch schon solche aus dem 2. Teile. Bei ihrer

Denkweise mussten gerade diese Briefe nicht leicht fallen. Sie erhielt am 4. Nov. 1769 deshalb von Wieland folgendes Rezept: 'Je conçois aisément combien le caractère d'un homme-diable ou diable-d'homme Vous doit faire de la peine. Pour monter Votre imagination, Vous ferez bien de lire quelquefois Milton et Klopstock pour Vous familiariser un peu avec les caractères de leurs diables. Prenez en ce qui Vous faut, donnez lui une belle figure avec tous les talents de plaire, bien du brillant, ajoutez y l'extrait des qualités du coeur d'une demidouzaine de *** que Vous connoissez, et assaisonnez le tout avec une forte dose d'esprit, et Vous aurez un Bösewicht tel qu'il Vous faut.'¹

LaRoche worked methodically along this prescribed pattern, for Wieland is more than pleased with the final result. She achieves in her final version of Derby, "eine Gestalt, die Wielands volle Anerkennung fand".²

Derby's physical appearance is outlined in accordance with the typical villain image. He possesses an "evil eye". Sternheim observes, "Lord Derby hatte ein feuriges Falkenauge, in welchem Unruhe war". (p. 76) He is compared to the ultimate "Bösewicht", the devil himself. Derby acknowledges his devilish image in the following analogy: "Der Morgen kam und fand mich wie einen tollen brennenden

¹Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XII.

²Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XIII.

Narren mit offener Brust und verstörten Gesichtszügen am Fenster. Der Spiegel zeigte mich mir unter einer Satansgestalt, die fähig gewesen wäre, das gute furchtsame Mädchen auf immer vor mir zu verscheuchen." (p. 105)

Derby's personality is totally in keeping with his looks. LaRoche portrays his emotions as motivated by evil. The physical passion he feels for the heroine is presented as a negative and destructive force linked to jealousy and irrational anger. In one of his letters, Derby describes the heroine's effect on him: "Eifersucht, Wut und Liebe jagten sich in meinem Kopfe herum; und gewiß derjenige, der mir gesagt hätte, sie wäre fort, hätte es mit seinem Leben bezahlen müssen;" (p. 158) This type of love with its sensual orientation reflects an immoral picture of wicked desires. Derby admits such lust for Sternheim in the following passage. Here LaRoche's didactic intentions are highlighted in the contrast between the innocent dove-like Sternheim and the wicked insatiable Derby: "Mein Täubchen ist noch nicht kirre genug, um das Feuer meiner Leidenschaft in der Nähe zu sehen. Dieses loderte die ganze Nacht durch in meiner Seele; keinen Augenblick schlief ich; immer sah ich das Fräulein vor mir, und meine Hand schloß sie zwanzigmal mit der nämlichen Heftigkeit zu mit welcher ich die ihrige gefaßt hatte." (p. 105)

Derby's actions are also proof of a stereotypical character portrayal based on rationalistic precepts. He looks evil, feels evil emotions and predictably, does evil things.

All of Derby's actions are motivated by his negatively portrayed possessive passion. He is calculating by nature. This trait combined with his strong jealousy of Seymour leads him to plot a strategy to win Sternheim for himself. He reveals his selfish intention: "Rasend dachte ich, Sehnsucht und Liebe in ihr gesehen zu haben, die einen Abwesenden zum Gegenstand hatten: aber ich schwur mir, sie mit oder ohne ihre Neigung zu besitzen. Wenn sie Liebe, feurige Liebe für mich bekömmt, so kann es sein, daß sie mich fesselt, aber auch kalt soll sie mein Eigentum werden." (p. 105)

Derby is cunning and devious to the core. His scheming character is revealed in this statement: "Ich war vor einigen Tagen in einer ungeduldigen Verlegenheit über die Auswahl der Mittel, die ich brauchen müßte, um das Fräulein von Sternheim zu gewinnen". (p. 104) He knows what he wants, decides how to get it and concludes that in wooing Sternheim, "gehört, daß ich mir ihr Vertrauen und ihre Neigung erwerbe." (p. 104) The cool, rational element of his strategy is expressed in his words, "allem meinem Verstand ist aufgeboden ihre schwache Seite zu finden." (p. 89)

The reader is prepared for the predictability of the villain and, consequently, his cunning methods of winning the heroine come as no surprise. His methodical calculations, which include a false declaration of virtuous love and deliberately staged acts of charity for the benefit of the

heroine, are successful. They result in the ultimate deception, a false marriage. This event epitomizes the cliché-like nature of the villain. He evokes the expected hate of the reader for his vice and conversely, the expected sympathy for the heroine's virtue.

Evidence of Derby's didactic role is further displayed in his remarks on Sternheim's character. The following statement starkly contrasts his guilt with her innocence: "Denn so künstlich und sicher ich sonst meine Schlingen zu flechten wußte, so nützen mich doch meine vorigen Erfahrungen bei ihr nichts, weil sie so viele Entfernung von allen sinnlichen Vergnügungen hat." (p. 120) In another passage he highlights Sternheim's virtues: "Aber meine Moralistin ist ganz anders gestimmt; sie setzt ihre Tugend und ihre Glückseligkeit in lauter Handlungen zum Besten des Nebenmenschen." (p. 146)

LaRoche concludes her rationalistic presentation of Derby's character with a morally suitable ending, retribution for the villain. Derby pays for his evil with an early death. In thus punishing his vice, the author sounds out the picture of the stereotyped villain.

1.2.2 Lord Seymour

Lord Seymour is, like Derby, one of the heroine's main suitors. However his character is portrayed quite differently. These two figures create a picture of contrast in LaRoche's character presentation. Lord Derby is a product of conventional rational judgement while Lord Seymour incorporates elements which typify a sentimental, or a more irrational outlook. The former character represents a superficial cliché while the latter is given greater depth and a more realistic breadth of qualities. Derby is the villain and Seymour, the honorable and virtuous hero.

There is no evidence of LaRoche's use of a rational outline in her characterization of Seymour as was the case in Derby's. In fact, Wieland's disapproval of her finished product is proof of this. Ridderhoff comments; "Lord Seymour gefiel Wieland damals so wenig wie früher."¹ The reasons for his dislike of Seymour are related to the kind of qualities LaRoche infuses into his character. She introduces a heightened subjective realm which contrasts with the objective rational emphasis that Wieland probably hoped to find. Furthermore, Seymour's character is unevenly torn between divergent motives and feelings, resulting in a problematic image, more individual and consequently more removed from the rational platform.

LaRoche gives Seymour a more realistic physical

¹Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XIII.

presence than Derby. The accent is on the spiritual. It is a deep inner being that she suggests by his outer appearance rather than the transparent stereotype which Derby projects. Sternheim is struck by "das durch etwas Melancholisches gedämpfte Feuer seiner schönen Augen" (p. 66) and observes that "seine Seele redete so deutlich in allen seinen Mienen." (p. 66) His looks reflects an "empfindsam" and not a rational being.

The "empfindsam" aspect of Seymour's character is displayed in a wide and complex range of emotions. One of these is a deep melancholy which plagues him constantly, leaving him moody and pessimistic. In one of his letters, he mentions a deep "Traurigkeit, die mich an mein Ende begleiten wird," (p. 167) and in another, he describes his inner struggle with "eine tötende Melancholie, die ich vergebens zu unterdrücken suche." (p. 82) Seymour does not experience these emotions in a balanced atmosphere but rather becomes prey to their extreme power over him. He admits more than once to experiencing an overwhelming force. On one occasion he is unable to sleep after a party because of intense "Bewegungen, die meine Lebensgeister erlitten." (p. 121) This last word emphasizes the suffering nature of his character which is linked to a lack of control over his emotions. In another instance, he writes to his friend Doktor T. about an attempt "wodurch meine heftigen Empfindungen möchten gemildert werden." (p. 81)

Seymour's character is problematic and therefore unpredictable. Sternheim refers to the "ungleichen und oft reißenden Lauf von Seymours Charakter." (p.274) Confusion exists in his character for there is a conflict between his reasonable self and his emotional one. In striving for virtue and truth, Seymour attempts to guide his actions by rational principles. He aims to be a gentleman. His words to Doktor T demonstrate this aim: "Sie haben mich das wahre Gute und Schöne erkennen und lieben gelehrt, ich wollte auch immer lieber sterben, als etwas Unedles oder Bösesartiges tun." (p. 81) However he is unable to confine himself to a moderated effort. His "empfindsam" nature appears to overwhelm his rational side so that his preoccupation with virtue is heightened to an intense degree. Consequently, he cannot restrain his feelings towards Sternheim's supposed involvement with the prince and has harsh words of condemnation for her behaviour: "Leichter wär' es mir gewesen, sie elend, häßlich, ja sogar tot zu sehen, als ein Zeuge ihrer moralischen Zernichtung zu sein." (p. 166)

This heightened motive, which Seymours calls "Tugendeifer" (p. 171) becomes confused with his passion for the heroine as he admits "Ihre Reize und meine Liebe liegen noch in dem Grunde meiner Seele;" (p. 123) These two forces create an inner emotional turmoil which leaves him weak. Realizing their effect, he continues the above statement; "aber ich hasse beide und mich selbst, daß ich

zu schwach bin, sie zu vernichten." (p.123) His passivity is a direct contrast to Derby's activity. In fact, he is so weakened by his feelings that he makes irrational conclusions. This irrational state is reflected in his lament, "Meine Gesundheit leidet schon lang auf allerlei Weise unter dieser Liebe. - Ich habe sie nun gesehen; ich werde um ihrentwillen sterben, und dies ist mir genug . . . - O Gott! - Ich muß sie erhalten oder sterben -." (p. 271)

While Derby takes things confidently into his own hands, Seymour is hesitant, becoming his worst enemy by entertaining counter-productive thoughts. He despairs, "Mein Gemütszustand ist nicht zu beschreiben; gefühllos, geistlos war ich, mißvergnügt, unruhig, und dennoch versagt'ich mir die einzige Hülfe, die meine Leiden erforderten - Nachrichten von D. zu haben." (p. 167) He knows the logical route to solving his problem, yet unlike Derby, is powerless to follow it. He does not act on his reasoning faculties for they are numbed by the subjective force in his personality.

Derby's calculating, predictable behaviour follows a rational plan. Seymour's "empfindsam" disposition leads to unpredictable behaviour. He is usually in a passive state. When, however, he does act, he acts in an uncontrolled manner. At the masquerade ball, he is sitting quietly, watching Sternheim dance with the prince until all at once he is overcome with emotion. He describes the sudden transformation in himself: "da wurde meine stille

Betrübnis in brennenden Zorn verwandelt; ich eilte in meine zweite Maske, näherte mich ihrer darin und machte ihr bittere und heftige Vorwürfe über ihre Frechheit, sich mit so vieler Lustigkeit in ihrem schändlichen Putz zu zeigen." (p. 167)

This sudden and rash behaviour comes as a complete surprise to the reader and therefore gives a more realistic and natural quality to his actions. His character has depth. The unexpected lends an individual aspect to his characterization. He is prey to conscious and subconscious factors, not merely the workings of an objectively imposed stereotyped pattern.

Seymour's actions are unsuccessful, alienating Sternheim and propelling him into further despair and isolation. He eventually reaches his desired goal, the hand of his beloved Sternheim, but only after a long and arduous period. LaRoche ultimately attempts to bring Seymour into the rational fold by rewarding his patience and suffering. She concludes his character depiction with less emphasis on the subjective, irrational side which dominates him earlier. Lord Rich's description of his brother reflects this by highlighting the reasonable quality of his enduring virtue. He remarks, "Er ist . . . ein schöner, aber stark rauschender Bach, der im Grund eine Menge reiner Goldkörner führt." (p. 274)

1.2.3 Fräulein von Sternheim

Two different tendencies of the author's personality are at work in her characterization of the heroine; her rational thoughts and ideas, and the power of her imagination, feelings and experiences. In her own words, LaRoche describes the process of constructing Sternheim's personality: "Doch ich wollte nun einmal ein papiernes Mädchen erziehen, weil ich meine eigenen nicht mehr hatte und da half mir meine Einbildungskraft aus der Verlegenheit und schuf den Plan zu Sophiens Geschichte. - Ihre Ältern erhielten den Charakter der meinigen; ich benutzte Zufälle, die an einem benachbarten Hofe sich ereigneten, und verwebte sie in Sophiens Leben, welcher ich ganz natürlich meine Neigungen und Denkart schenkte, wie jeder Schriftsteller seine Lieblinge mit den seinigen auszustatten pflegt."¹ The result is an interesting mixture of qualities in the heroine.

The figure of Sternheim is a product combining two divergent elements: LaRoche's instinctive capacity for spontaneity and her methodically rational approach to ideas. They exist within her in a framework of constant tension. She is on the one hand a rational creation, designed to educate by advocating her ideas and moral principles. On the other hand, she embodies the world of emotion, of "Empfindsamkeit", in which she is influenced

¹Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. VIII.

by involuntary subjective feelings. The stereotyped facets of the heroine's personality are combined with a more natural, original trend, resulting in a character portrayal of depth and realism.

Each side of Sternheim's character vies for domination over the other. The fluctuation of these contradictory forces causes a confusion within her which she is powerless to explain or rationalize. The following outcry to her friend Emilia reflects the potency of this tension. She vehemently challenges Emilia's husband in a frantic attempt to understand the presence of these forces: "Emilia! fragen Sie den metaphysischen Kopf ihres Mannes, woher der Widerspruch käme, der sich zwischen meinen stärksten immerwährenden Empfindungen und meinen Ideen zeigte." (p. 204)

The rational motivation and function of the heroine is most strongly illuminated in her discourse on various theories and concepts. Detailed ideas are presented in the thoughts which preoccupy Sternheim's letters. Her reflections on nature illustrate this part of her character. She regards nature as a rational tool, designed by the Creator as part of an intricate pattern for the purpose of serving the physical world, especially mankind. Observing nature at work around her, Sternheim remarks "wie getreu die Natur die Pflichten des ihr aufgelegten ewigen Gesetzes der Nutzbarkeit in allen Zeiten und Witterungen des Jahres erfüllt." (p. 196)

This ideal of nature is used as a means of moralizing

on human behaviour. Sternheim asks rhetorically, "Warum, sag' ich, warum ist die moralische Welt ihrer Bestimmung nicht eben so getreu als die physikalische?" (p. 196)

Her religious ideas are closely linked to this function of nature. She believes that the study of nature leads to a logical belief in God and his Providence for humanity. This in turn results in the contentment of the individual in his world. Sternheim reasons, "Dürre Blätter und gelbes Gras werden durch Herbstregen zu einer Nahrung der Fruchtbarkeit unsrer Erde bereitet; diese Betrachtung läßt uns gewiß nicht ohne eine frohe Empfindung über die Vorsorge unsers Schöpfers." (p. 196)

Sternheim expresses ideas on education. LaRoche depicts her as preoccupied with the training of young upper-, middle- and lower class girls. Her views on education consist of training the former two to efficiently run a household while simultaneously nourishing their capacity as salon conversationalists, as well as instructing the latter in vocational domestic education. She not only proposes an idea but methodically, in rational fashion, offers a precise practical delineation of her concept. She also treats education as a natural process designed to improve one's individual capabilities.

The heroine's energies are also directed at making statements on social issues. Her preference for the natural, untainted rural life over the superficial ritualistic lifestyle of the court is often expressed.

she is also quick to point a critical finger at the amoral habits of the upper classes. What LaRoche stresses most in Sternheim's social statements is an emphasis on activity. She constantly mentions "die wohltätige Nächstenliebe" (p. 194) as an ideal to strive for, not merely in theory but through its application in "Gutes zu tun." (p. 194) This humanitarian concern is based on the premise, "daß gute Handlungen viel ruhmwürdiger seien als die feinsten Gedanken." (p. 94) Consequently, charity occupies a great portion of Sternheim's time and effort.

An emphasis on the idea of virtue dominates Sternheim's letters, reflecting her role as a rational example to the female reader. She constantly mentions its supreme function in guaranteeing the happiness of the individual. In the following reflection on her personal life, she declares its value: "Meine Erziehung hat mich gelehrt, daß Tugend und Geschicklichkeiten das einzige wahre Glück und Gutes tun, die einzige wahre Freude eines edlen Herzens sei;" (p. 192)

The rational ideal of "Gelassenheit" is a virtue. Sternheim presents the view that resignation to one's fate is a virtue, an obligation and a means of preserving a balanced existence in the world. As Madam Leidens, the heroine's words reflect this rational principle. She writes that "das Beste, was alle Kräfte meiner Seele tun konnten, gelassene Ertragung meines Schicksals war - eine Tugend." (p. 194)

Modesty is another virtue. Her opinions on modesty are expressed in regard to one's self-image, one's relationship to others and in a connection to divine Providence. Sternheim proclaims its necessity "in Kleidung und anderm Aufwand" (p. 139) in a lecture to Frau T on how to educate her children. Her own desire for obedience to modesty is voiced in the following statement: "Aber was heißt der Beifall derer, welche ihren Nutzen von mir suchen? Und wie froh bin ich, mit keiner besonderen Schönheit bezeichnet zu sein, weil ich diese Art von Ekel für allgemeinem Lob in mir fühle." (p. 60) To be truly modest implies obedience and humility to the Almighty. Sternheim's words reflect this idea as she counsels Madam T, "und lenken sie alsdann Ihre Kinder zu einer ehrerbietigen Zufriedenheit mit ihrem Schöpfer." (p. 137)

Sternheim is pursued at different times by four different suitors. As a result, she has ample opportunity to express her thoughts on love and marriage. Sternheim believes in a reasonable love based on virtue and moderation, in accordance with rationalistic precepts. She denounces superficial and extreme attributes. This is the picture she offers of the ideal love: "Schönheit und Witz haben keine Gewalt über mein Herz, ungeachtet ich den Wert von beiden kenne, eine feurige Leidenschaft und zärtliche Reden auch nicht; am wenigsten aber die Lobeserhebungen meiner persönlichen Annehmlichkeiten; denn da sehe ich in meinem Liebhaber nichts als die Liebe

seines Vergnügens. Die Achtung für die guten Neigungen meines Herzens und für die Bemühungen meines Geistes, um Talente zu sammeln, dieses allein rührt mich, weil ich es für ein Zeichen einer gleichgestimmten Seele und der wahren dauerhaften Liebe halte;" (p. 153)

Sternheim speaks of marriage in similar terms, as a union based on rational values. Her ideas dwell on the importance of moral considerations as opposed to any emotional desires. She describes her marriage to Seymour in words reflecting an accordance with her stated convictions, referring to it as "eine Entscheidung, die von Tugend, Weisheit und Rechtschaffenheit gebilliget wird!" (p. 274)

The heroine believes that adherence to the above principles and morally guided actions will bring solace and spare the individual suffering. She has faith that "übende Tugend allein kann den Balsam des Trosts in die Wunden der Seele träufeln." (p. 248) The ideas she expounds serve as a rational framework through which she tries to maintain a stable, comfortable existence. They console her. Sternheim's ideas on virtue deflect her morbid regrets of past disappointments and suffering, and help her to focus on optimistic thoughts of the future. Her desire to put these ideas into action results in productive planning which enables her to overcome sadness.

The above ideas of the heroine are presented in declarations, usually in the context of moral lessons. They appear as organized formulas and their logical

orientation reflects the author's motive of "Erziehung" and "Belehrung". Sternheim's words create the rational image of a strong and virtuous character. Even Derby, the villain acknowledges this image in his remark: "Hätte sie nur gewöhnlichen Witz und gewöhnliche Tugend, so wäre mein Plan leicht gewesen; aber da sie ganz eigentlich nach Grundsätzen denkt und handelt, so ist alles, wodurch ich sonst gefiel, bei ihr verloren." (p. 104)

However, closer examination of Sternheim's character reveals the presence of a contrasting force to her ideas: her feelings. The emotions she experiences and the actions ensuing from these emotions are often in direct contradiction to the views and principles in which she believes.

Sternheim is plagued by heightened emotions. This sentimental side of her personality is directly in conflict with her role as rational spokesman. While she presents her convictions as a guide for herself and for others, she encounters a conflict situation in their realization due to the presence of these emotions. The heroine's father is witness to this other side of her character at an early age and expresses a fear of its consequences: "Aber da sie lauter Empfindung ist, so haben viele, viele die elende Macht, sie zu kränken." (p. 53)

Her feelings are not merely a simple contrast to her ideas but their intensity stresses a heightened irrational quality. The heroine herself admits "aber mein Kopf, meine Empfindungen sind verwüstet" (p. 185) and on another

occasion she laments "meine Empfindungen waren zu stark und zu wallend." (p. 191)

These feelings are a threat to the ordered existence represented by the world of Sternheim's ideas. Their presence adds a fanatic zeal to her actions, a phenomenon which negatively confronts the moderate stance of her convictions. Derby refers to "ihre Schwärmerei" (p. 187) and describes its extreme effect: "Da stund ich und fluchte über die Schwärmerin, die uns zu Narren machte." (p. 117) Emilia's husband also recognizes this aspect in her character which Sternheim here attempts to minimize: "Es freut mich auch, daß der Mann meiner Emilie den warmen Ton meiner Fürsprache zum Besten der Liebe allein in meiner Neigung zum Wohltun suchte, ob er mich schon einer Schwärmerei in dieser Tugend beschuldigt. (Oh! möchte doch dieses Übermaß einer guten Leidenschaft der einzige Fehler meiner künftigen Jahre sein!) -" (p. 215)

Sternheim demonstrates this exaggerated emotion and its resulting behaviour at the prince's masquerade ball when, overcome by strong feelings at Seymour's verbal attack, she loses her composure and rushes out of the room. Derby recounts the general reaction of the court: "Fast bei allen wurde die Aufführung des Fräuleins als ein übertriebenes Geziere getadelt. 'Mann kann tugendhaft sein, ohne ein großes Geräusch zu machen.' - 'Sollte man nicht denken, der Fürst hätte noch keine Dame als sie geliebt?' - 'Aber es gibt eine sanftere und edlere Art von

Verteidigung seiner Ehre, zu der man just nicht die ganze Welt zu Zeugen nimmt'; und dergleichen." (p. 157) Even Wieland expresses his disapproval of the heroine's frenzied behaviour. He comments in a footnote, "Und diejenigen, welche dieses sagten, hatten an sich selbst eben nicht so gar Unrecht. W." (p. 157) He is clearly upset by this irrational quality in her character.

The duality at work within the heroine is reflected in her social concerns. She believes in organized charity, motivated by rationalistic considerations and founded on the primacy of the idea guiding the action. Yet in reality, her charitable actions are a sudden reaction to overwhelming feelings. In short, her philanthropic ideas are starkly contrasted by spontaneous outbursts of "Mitleid". She displays this phenomenon on seeing a group of poor farmers in the country. The following words describe the takeover of feeling: "Zärtliches Mitleiden; Wünsche und Segen erfüllten mein Herz, als ich ihren sauren Fleiß und die traurigen, doch gelaßnen Blicke sah," (p. 76) Sternheim takes no thorough assessment of their status in order to aid them in the future. Rather, she is moved by a feeling of sympathy to give them "einige Stücke Gelds, die ich den Nächsten an unserm Wege ungebeten zuwarf" (p. 76) and her intention is merely "ihnen einen guten Augenblick zu schaffen." (p. 76)

Following the same contradictory pattern, is Sternheim's relationship to love. Her convictions on true love and

marriage are based on reason and moderation but her actual feelings of love are of a contrasting nature. Lord Rich professes the kind of rational love for Sternheim which she herself describes as ideal. In actual fact however, her feelings counteract her ideas. Long after making Rich's acquaintance and developing the highest regard for his person, she still exhibits a yearning desire for Seymour. Her attachment to the latter is deeply rooted in her emotions and she helplessly laments, "O mein Herz, warum hütetest du dich so lange vor dieser Erinnerung! Niemals mehr getrautest du dir den Namen Seymour zu denken, nun fragst du, was würde er sagen! und weinst über seine Vergessenheit! Oh! nimm diesen Teil weg, laß ihn nimmer in mein Gedächtnis kommen - sein Herz kannte das meine für ihn niemals, und nun ist es zu spät!" (pp. 251-252)

In marriage, Sternheim's reaction is similar. Allegiance to her heart is stronger than obedience to her mind. She chooses not to marry Lord Rich, the mature and stable suitor whose rational qualities she admires and respects. Her decision is based not on reason but on the feelings within her heart. It is Seymour whom she prefers as a husband because, as she explains, "Und war er nicht der Mann, den mein Herz sich wünschte?" (p. 272)

Sternheim's strength of character is fostered by her firm rational convictions. Yet this stereotyped rationalistic image of the heroine is transformed into that of a weak and helpless figure whenever she becomes a

victim of her feelings.

She stresses the importance of virtue and its application in activity as a means to a harmonious existence but is nevertheless prey to feelings she conceives as negative because they interfere with her ability to adapt to her surroundings. At court she complains to Emilia, "O mein Kind, wie fremd ist mein Herz in diesem Lande! . . . D. hat nichts-nichts für mich." (p. 88) Even her clarity of thought is diminished by the force of her emotions. The following words describe their powerful hold on her: "Sehen Sie, Emilia, wieviel mir mit Ihnen fehlt; alle Empfindungen, die sich in mir zusammendrängen, würde ich Ihnen sagen; da wäre mein Herz erleichtert und schien nicht durch diesen bemerkten Nebel hindurch." (p. 228) She is actually admitting her insufficient personal strength in her inability to deal with the feelings that complicate the pursuit of a straightforward course of action.

The heroine's belief in "Gelassenheit" is negated by her intense feelings of despair. Although convinced that adherence to this ideal guarantees stability, she is often unsuccessful in following through. She pleads with Emilia, "Sie sehen, daß ich über mich zweifelhaft bin; helfen Sie mir zurechte," (p. 204) and further in a dramatic nature metaphor, she describes the grip which the feeling of "Verzweiflung" has on her: "Emilia, haben Sie sich jemals in den Platz eines Menschen stellen können, der in einem elenden Kahn auf der stürmenden See ängstlich sein Leben

fühlt und mit zitternder Hoffnung hin und her um Anschein der Hoffnung sieht? Lange stoßen ihn die Wellen herum und lassen ihn Verzweiflung fühlen;" (p. 253) Lord Rich, ever the rational gentleman, is overwhelmed by the magnitude of this irrational force within Sternheim and expresses concern for her health: "Wissen Sie, Madam Leidens, daß dies, was Sie sagen, den größten Grad von Verzweiflung anzeigt und mich in die tödliche Unruhe wirft?" (p. 239)

Sternheim believes in the practice of virtue as a means of achieving consolation and a peaceful existence. Yet her own disposition is an obstacle to achieving this end, for it is clouded by a tendency towards melancholy feelings. Her father, Oberst von Sternheim, points out, "daß ihre empfindungsvolle Seele einen zu starken Hang zu melancholischer Zärtlichkeit bekommen und durch eine allzusehr vermehrte Reizbarkeit der Nerven unfähig werden möchte, Schmerzen und Kummer zu ertragen." (p. 51) Consequently, as she is easily controlled by these emotions, she experiences pain and suffering instead of relief and consolation. Rosina's description of her pathetic mistress on discovery of Derby's false marriage stands in stark contrast to the strong, self-assured ideal which Sternheim tries to attain: "ich darf unsere Dame nicht ansehen; das Herz bricht mir; sie ißt nichts; sie ist den ganzen Tag auf den Knien vor einem Stuhl, da hat sie ihren Kopf liegen; unbeweglich, außer, daß sie manchmal ihre Arme gen Himmel streckt und mit einer

sterbenden Stimme ruft: 'Ach Gott, ach, mein Gott!'"

(p. 183)

This weak and passive state develops into a longing for death. Sternheim's ideas are of no use to her in these moments where "sie hätte nichts mehr zu wünschen als den Tod." (p. 184) Instead of achieving "Trost" through "Gelassenheit" in the manner which she idealizes, she feels "Kummer", a "Kummer" which Rosina writes in reference to Derby, "war so groß, daß sie hoffte, er würde sie töten". (p. 188)

Sternheim believes modesty is a virtue. However, her views on modesty are not appropriately realized because of interference from her feelings. Her modesty is altered to an egotistic feeling which elicits negative results. Sternheim admits this fault in herself and agonizes, "Oh ich bin den Pflichten der Wohltätigkeit des Beispiels entgangen! . . . Mein Nachdenken und meine Feder machten mich traurig; ich konnte an Geschehenen nichts mehr ändern, mußte den Tadel, der über mich erging, als eine gerechte Folge meiner irregegangener Eigenliebe ansehen." (p. 175)

In a comment on the above statement, Wieland rationalizes this quality over which Sternheim despairs: "Aber werden nicht eben durch dieses warnende Beispiel ihre Fehler selbst wohltätig? Warum findet sie nichts Tröstendes in dieser Betrachtung? - Weil auch die edelmütigsten Seelen nicht auf Unkosten ihrer Eigenliebe wohltätig sind." (p. 175) He attempts to divert LaRoche's emphasis from the sadness

of the heroine to a feeling of solace for the instructive value of past experience. Rationally, he aims to give a purpose to this negative quality.

The potency of Sternheim's "Eigenliebe" is a threat to her confidence and her belief in moderation. Even after trying to control it by applying her ideas on activity, she still fears its reappearance. While involved with her plan for the education of lower class girls, Sternheim is ever conscious of the trait which haunts her: "Aber hierbei fällt mir ein Gleichnis ein, so ich mit der Eigenliebe machen möchte-daß sie von Polypen = Art sei; man kann ihr alle Zweige und Arme nehmen, ja sogar den Hauptstamm verwunden; sie wird doch Mittel finden, sich in neue Auswüchse zu verbreiten. Wie verwundet, wie gedemütiget war meine Seele!" (p. 193)

1.3 Themes

The following discussion will involve an examination of LaRoche's treatment of nature, education, love-marriage, social issues and metaphysics within her first novel, Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim. The primary focus of this examination concerns the diverse elements inherent in LaRoche's presentation of the above-mentioned themes. Specifically, this discussion will attempt to crystallize the novel's qualities, whether rational, irrational or "empfindsam", conventional or progressive as they apply to the individual themes.

1.3.1 Nature

LaRoche assigns nature a prominent role in her novel. This role includes a diversity of attitudes which both complement and contradict one another. Her eclectic presentation of this theme contains both a rational, and an "empfindsam" and irrational orientation.

The rational orientation is evident in the objective functional attributes which LaRoche assigns to nature. These impersonal attributes reflect a didactic, a practical utilitarian and an impersonal dimension.

The didactic dimension appears in LaRoche's depiction of nature as proof of God's existence. Reason is the means to achieving this end. She seems to indicate that reason leads man to a better understanding of the world around him.

its application to the observation of the natural world should result in his discovery of the essence of God himself. Sternheim's words reflect this view: "Es ist eine pflicht des guten Geschöpfs, die Werke seines Urhebers zu kennen, von denen wir alle Augenblicke unsers Lebens soviel Gutes genießen; da die ganze physikalische Welt lauter Werke und Zeugnisse der Wohltätigkeit und Güte unsers Schöpfers in sich faßt, deren Anblick und Kenntniss das reinste und vollkommenste, keinem Zufall, keinem Menschen unterworfenen Vergnügen in unsre Seele gießt." (p. 140)

Not only does the objective study of landscape enlighten man's consciousness about God's true nature but it aids in his moral development. It makes man aware of his responsibility to his Creator and places his relationship to God in its proper perspective. Sternheim observes that "die Beobachtung der physikalischen Welt macht uns zu guten Geschöpfen in Absicht auf unsern Urheber. Indem sie uns unsre Unmacht zeigt, hingegen seine Größe, Güte und Weisheit bewundern lehrt, lernen wir ihn auf eine edle Art lieben und verehren;". (p. 50)

The above function of nature reflects the early 18th century theories of Leibnez as presented in his Theodicy of 1710 and his Monadology of 1714. LaRoche appears to further support these theories in her portrayal of the cosmos as a mechanistic system of complete order. Her heroine treats the world as a harmonious series of microcosms, beginning

at the lowest level and leading, by stages, to higher, more developed ones with the highest and final system, or "Monad", as Leibniz labels it, being God himself. Sternheim describes this outlook as reflected in three different microcosms: the mineral world, the plant world and the world of man: "Das kleinste Sandkörnchen erfüllt seine Bestimmung, wohlthätig zu sein und die Erde durch Lockernheit fruchtbar zu erhalten so wie die große Felsen, die uns staunen machen, unsern allgemeinen Wohnplatz befestigen helfen." (p. 174) This interrelated series of systems results in a perfect universe, the best world possible. LaRoche's heroine has faith in the laws of nature, which she delineates in the above quote, for they are ordained by a benevolent God.

Nature's practical, utilitarian role appears in LaRoche's adoption of the views of Gellert and Brockes. Her picture of nature reveals a complex system in which the physical world has clearly delineated functions in an intricately prescribed pattern. Sternheim sees all the natural elements working alongside one another to achieve harmony. Here she describes how each part of the system fulfills its role in order to bring about the winter season: "Ich stehe früh auf, ich lege mich an mein Fenster und sehe, wie getreu die Natur die Pflichten des ihr aufgelegten ewigen Gesetzes der Nutzbarkeit in allen Zeiten und Witterungen des Jahres erfüllt. Der Winter nähert sich; die Blumen sind verschwunden und auch bei den Strahlen der Sonne hat die Erde kein glänzendes Ansehen mehr:". (p. 196)

Not only does nature's rational function appear in LaRoche's depiction of the lower microcosm but also in its relationship to the human realm. Sternheim's question reveals another purpose of the plant and animal world, to serve man. She asks, "Ist nicht das ganze Pflanzen und Tierreich mit lauter Gaben der Wohltätigkeit für unser Leben erfüllt?" (p. 174) Her words "Endzweck der Natur" indicate nature's responsibility in meeting man's most basic requirement, food for survival: "Wir brauchen Nahrung, um die Kräfte unsers Körpers zu unterhalten. Und diesen Endzweck der Natur können wir durch die simpelsten Speisen am leichtesten erreichen." (p. 138)

LaRoche's treatment of landscape indicates the impersonal quality of nature. Man does not subjectively experience its beauty here. Rather he follows the dictates of reason and tries to change its individual form into a general and useful pattern. Sternheim's description of Graf von W's castle illustrates this rational picture of nature where perfection is found not in its pure, untouched state but in its structural, practical transformation. She writes "Es ist an der Spitze eines Berges erbaut und hat auf vierzehn Stunden weit die schönste Gegend eines mit Feldern, Wiesen und zerstreuten Bauernhöfen gezierten Tales vor sich liegen, welches ein fischreicher Bach durchfließt und waldichte Anhöhen umfassen. Auf dem Berge sind weitläufige Gärten und Spaziergänge, nach dem edlen Geschmack des vorigen Besitzers angelegt, in welchem ich

seinen Lieblings grundsatz, 'das Angenehme immer mit dem Nützlichen zu verbinden', sehr schön ausgeführt sah." (p.77)

The irrational orientation in LaRoche's presentation of nature appears in her portrayal of a subjective world. Nature is now experienced primarily through the individual's senses.

According to this outlook, nature's beauty can be enjoyed purely for itself. The novel contains this aesthetic notion in a context of erotic overtones. The naked body is seen as representing the original monument of nature, a monument created exclusively for pleasure. Derby asks Sternheim, his new "wife", to undress for him, his intention being "in ihr den Abdruck des ersten Meisterstücks der Natur zu bewundern." (p. 181)

It is interesting to note Wieland's reaction of disgust to this irrational picture. He clearly cannot condone the idea that beauty is able to exist solely to give pleasure. In a footnote he reprimands Derby: "Welche Zumutung, Mylord Derby? Konnten Sie ihre Zeit nicht besser nehmen." (p. 181)

This aesthetic quality is extended to the plant kingdom in the novel. A picture emerges in which a beautiful flower, like a beautiful woman, exists simply to delight the senses. Here beauty is a visual stimulus. Sternheim compares flowers that serve a concrete, practical use with "die Gattungen der Blumen, welche nur zu Ergötzung des Auges dienten,". (p. 94)

Once again, Wieland steps in to denounce this view but this time he goes to greater lengths to make his point! In a rational manner, he tries to prove that the whole physical world serves a concrete practical purpose: "Man kann schwerlich sagen, daß es Gattungen von Blumen oder Pflanzen gebe, welche nur zu Ergötzung des Auges dienten; und, so viel mir bekannt ist, kennt man keine einzige Gattung, welche nicht entweder einen ökonomischen oder offizinalischen Nutzen für den Menschen hätte, oder zum Unterhalt einiger Tiere, Vögel, Insekten und Gewürm diene, folglich in Absicht des ganzen Systems unsers Planeten wirklich einen Nutzen hätte." (p. 95)

In this irrational picture of nature, landscape is no longer moulded by the hands of man into a general organized plan. It exists freely in its original untouched state. This untamed landscape greatly appeals to the heroine. She expresses fondness for the "unbegrenzten schönen Gemische von Feld, Waldungen, Bächen und Wiesen, wo die Natur ihre bestem Gaben in reizender Unordnung verbreitet!" (pp. 149-150) This world in which the individual can experience nature in its simplicity and purity is celebrated above the artificial and contrived world of art. The heroine admits contempt for the man-made productions of "Kunstgärten" (p. 150) and "Lustgärten". (p. 150)

This kind of landscape is conducive to an individual emotional experience. It allows transition to a heightened state whereby the sensitive inner being is touched. In

this world, man does not simply look at and study his natural environment, he feels it. Seymour experiences his natural surroundings through his soul, the source of all his feelings. Sternheim observes that Seymour "ging oft in den Garten allein und kam mit Zügen einer gewaltsamen Bewegung in der Seele zurück,". (p. 76)

The heroine also points to this personal experience of nature in the following metaphor. The Wertherian tone in her words indicates her subjective relationship to such an image. She writes to her friend, "Emilia, haben Sie sich jemals in den Platz eines Menschen stellen können, der in einem elenden Kahn auf der stürmenden See ängstlich sein Leben fühlt und mit zitternder Hoffnung hin und her um Anschein der Hoffnung sieht? Lange stoßen ihn die Wellen herum und lassen ihn Verzweiflung fühlen;". (p. 253)

Another picture of man's intimate unity with nature appears in the figure of Sternheim. There is a close correlation between her inner world and her physical surroundings. In other words, she experiences nature negatively during the negative period of her life. Her greatest suffering and the most unfruitful period of her life occur in a sad, dreary environment. While Derby's prisoner in Scotland, she is surrounded by barren land: "Oh, wie arm ist hier die Natur! man sieht, daß ihre Eingeweide bleiern sind. Mit tränenden Augen sah ich das rauhe, magere Stück Feld,". (p. 248) Here she experiences "dunklen Hoffnungen". (p. 252)

In rousseauistic fashion, LaRoche presents the attractiveness of simple, country life. This natural world is contrasted to the artificial life at court and idealized for the freedom and personal expression it allows the individual. Here man can enjoy and experience an intimate relationship to his environment, thereby achieving a harmonious, idyllic existence. Sternheim feels this effect. She describes her overwhelming joy on a particular afternoon: "Ich war voll herzlicher Freude; es war Grasboden, den ich betrat, Bäume, unter deren Schatten ich eine Schlüssel Milch verzehrte, frische Luft . . . Mir schien's, als ob die unbegrenzte Aussicht in das Reich der Natur meinen Lebensgeistern und Empfindungen eine freiere Bewegung verschaffte, sie von dem einkerkernden Zwang des Aufenthalts in den Mauern eines Palastes voller gekünstelten Zieraten und Vergoldungen in ihre natürliche Freiheit und in ihr angebornes Element setzte. Ich redete auch mehr und freudiger als sonst". (p. 126)

1.3.2 Education

LaRoche's educational ideals, as presented in this novel, basically reflect "Aufklärung" tenets. They incorporate the idea of a general, rationalistic education with a curriculum structured according to the demands of the particular social class. This mechanical, fact-oriented outlook takes its cues from society and not the individual. LaRoche simultaneously presents a subdued contrast to this dominant theme in the form of a more individual, intuitive approach to education. In the latter approach, the instruction of the individual becomes influenced by personal qualities.

The rationalistic approach is strongly illustrated in the novel by constant references to the learning of facts. Education becomes a mechanical process whereby data are assimilated according to two conventional "Aufklärung" methods: the systematic study of books and the instructive application of nature's function. Sternheim mentions the former in the advice she gives to Madam T concerning a suitable curriculum for her children: "Flößen Sie beiden Liebe und Geschmack für die edle und unserm Geiste so nützliche Beschäftigung des Lesers ein, besonders alles dessen, was zu der besten Kenntnis unserer Körperwelt gehört." (p. 140) Sternheim's father encourages "die Liebe zum Lesen" (p. 49) as a means of learning history. He further encourages objective study of the natural environment as a means of obtaining knowledge. Useful information

is collected by the "Beobachtung der physikalischen Welt". (p. 50) Sternheim's suggestion to Madam T also reflects nature's role as an educational tool. Her use of the word "Kenntnis" reflects a rational orientation. She counsels "aber lassen Sie sie daneben eine einfache Kenntnis von der Luft, die sie atmen, von der Erde, die sie betreten, der Pflanzen und Tiere, von welchen sie ernähret und gekleidet werden, erlangen;". (p. 219)

This mechanical type of education is presented within a conventional social framework. LaRoche depicts a system of class-conscious education intended to preserve the status quo. The aim of instruction is to fit the individual into a general pattern designated by his or her class. It is designed to facilitate the individual's role in society and has no interest in acknowledging the function of personality. The novel focuses primarily on female education. The author includes a complete picture of a general education plan for girls of the lower-, middle- and upper classes.

The 18th century system of education was more developed in its middle and upper class curriculum than in that of the lower class. LaRoche draws attention to this fact. Sternheim expresses concern for this underprivileged class and her concern in itself reflects a somewhat progressive attitude: "Die Großen und Mittlern haben mündlichen und schriftlichen Unterricht neben allen Vorteilen des Reichtums und Ansehens; und die geringe, so

nützliche Klasse bekommt kaum den Abfall des Überflusses von Kenntnissen und Wohlergehen." (p. 219) She subsequently devises a plan for a technical-vocational school. However the curriculum limits instruction to the practical training of servants, aiming to make them useful members of their social class. Consequently, LaRoche's initial progressive attitude is eventually integrated into a conventional scheme.

Education for the middle-class female receives a broader basis but still relates to the traditional roles for women of that class. It is without access to the intellectual sphere. When asked by Madam C, "Soll ich suchen, meine jungen Frauenzimmern gelehrt zu machen?" (p. 219) Sternheim answers "'Gott bewahre Sie vor diesem Gedanken, der unter tausend Frauenzimmern des Privatstandes kaum bei einer mit ihren Umständen paßt! . . .'" (p. 219) Sternheim's exclamatory reaction reflects the revolutionary nature of Madam C's suggestion for the conventional 18th century mind. Instead she suggests a curriculum based on the practical demands of the social station. This involves two functions: the running of the household and the ability to serve as an entertaining companion in the salon.

To achieve the former, LaRoche indicates the practical implementation of household duties and the study of nature. Sternheim advises Madam C, "halten Sie zur Übung jeder häuslichen Tugend an; aber lassen Sie daneben eine einfache Kenntnis von der Luft, die sie atmen, von der Erde, die sie

betreten, den Pflanzen und Tieren, von welchen sie ernähret und gekleidet werden, erlangen". (p. 219)

To achieve the latter function, LaRoche suggests the acquisition of more serious knowledge. However the intellectual subjects are not to be studied deeply as the purpose of this information is not for individual gain. It serves to benefit one's social companion. This light acquaintance with serious data is designed not to make these middle-class girls more intelligent but more interesting conversation-alists for their male partners. Therefore, Sternheim includes in their instruction, "einen Auszug der Historie, damit sie nicht ganz fremde dasitzen und Langeweile haben, wenn Männer sich in ihrer Gegenwart davon unterhalten und damit sie sehen, daß Tugend und Laster beständig einen Kreislauf durch das ganze menschliche Geschlecht gemacht haben; lassen Sie sie jedes Wort, so eine Wissenschaft bezeichnet, verstehen. Zum Ex. was Philosophie, was Mathematik sei - ". (p. 219) The words "Auszug" and "Wort" reflect the superficial veneer of this intellectual learning process.

LaRoche appears to advocate a more general education for upper class German girls based on the French model. Its emphasis on the shallow learning of serious subjects reflects the role of these girls as interesting companions to the male. Sternheim describes this curriculum: "Die Schönheiten der Sprache und des Ausdrucks. Von allen Wissenschaften eine Idee zu haben, um hie und da etliche

Worte in die Unterredung mischen zu können, die ihnen den Ruhm vieler Kenntnisse erhaschen helfen. Wenigstens die Namen aller Schriften zu wissen und etwas, das einem Urteil gleiche, darüber zu sagen." (p. 113) The words "Unterredung" and "Ruhm" underline the importance of appearing knowledgeable rather than being knowledgeable.

LaRoche depicts the other attributes of this curriculum for the upper class female in the education of her heroine. It too is presented within a traditional 18th century framework. Not only does Sternheim have the practical training required of her class, "Frauenzimmer-arbeiten. . . die Führung des ganzen Hauses, wobei ihr die Tag = und Rechnungsbücher ihrer Frau Mutter zum Muster gegeben wurde" (p. 51), but she also develops her talents to entertain. The abundant leisure time of her class is reflected in the following quote which points to the female role of charming hostess. It is a description of Sternheim's qualities: "In der Musik brachte sie es auf der Laute und im Singen zu Vollkommenheit. Das Tanzen, soviel eine Dame davon wissen soll, war eine Kunst, welche eher von ihr eine Vollkommenheit erhielt". (p. 51)

Finally, LaRoche's "Aufklärung" treatment of education includes the conventional picture of a sex role conscious curriculum. Male education is career-oriented, having the intellect as its focus. Female education is home-oriented. Sternheim specifies which subjects are suitable for each: "Zeichnen, Musik, Sprachen, alle schönen Arbeiten des

Frauenzimmers für ihre Töchter, für ihre Söhne alle Kenntnisse, die man von wohlerzogenen jungen Mannsleuten fodert." (pp. 139-140)

The contrasting approach to the above is presented in a lighter vein. It involves a more personal type of instruction where the curriculum is tailored to aid the individual's development by building and improving upon inborn, natural abilities.

Sternheim's highly organized plan for the education of lower class girls is personality-oriented. She proposes technical-vocational training involving four different types of instruction, each specialized according to the individual's specific nature: "1. Sanfte, gutherzige Geschöpfe bildete ich zu Kinderwärtnerinnen; 2. Die Anlage zu Witz und geschickte Finger zur Kammerjungfer; 3. Nachdenkende und fleißige Mädchen zu Köchinnen und Haushälterinnen und 4. die letzte Klasse von dienstfähigen zu Haus =, Küchen = und Gartenmägden." (p. 193)

The heroine herself stands as an example of this personal approach to education. Sternheim is educated to an elevated degree, i.e. beyond the general framework of her social class. This is because of her individual intelligence. Since nature has given her a head start, her father structures her education to meet her personal capacity for intellectual learning. He does not stifle her growth by forcing her into a general mold of instruction: "weil das Fräulein eine große Anlage von Verstand zeigte,

beschäftigte er diesen mit der Philosophie nach allen ihren Teilen, mit der Geschichte und den Sprachen". (p. 51) The words "nach allen ihren Teilen" indicate a more extensive study of these subjects than what befits a mere hostess.

Sternheim embodies the ideal of the well-read person. Her repertory includes not the cheap, frivolous novels devoured by the majority of her class but more intellectual authors. She is able to quote from the enlightened works of Shakespeare, Thomson, Addison and Pope. In this regard, she slightly transcends the general boundaries of her class. In a small progressive step, LaRoche allows her heroine this extended intellectual curriculum which approaches the realm of male education.

This personal element in education is further reflected in the novel. In LaRoche's presentation of the conventional general curriculum for upper-class females based on the French model, there is a hint of a more individual experience. Sternheim's words reflect the role of personal initiative in the learning experience. The individual's educational development, if motivated by a personal decision, results in a deeper, more profound quest for knowledge. The above idea is illustrated in Sternheim's use of the following nature metaphor: "Immer genug, wenn man begierig ist, die Blüte der Bäume zu kennen; bald wird man auch den Wachstum und die Reife der Früchte erforschen wollen." (p. 113)

To encourage this personal initiative in learning, a certain atmosphere must be present. Instead of the strict,

pedantic approach to presenting facts, a more intuitive and leisurely attitude is necessary on the part of the teacher. Here learning is presented as a pleasurable experience. This more natural approach to education is reflected in the following quote. Sternheim believes "daß man die Pfade der Wahrheit mit Blumen bestreue". (p. 218)

The pleasurable element in education facilitates a natural progression of development. In other words, the student who enjoys learning will choose to learn more. Since the individual has an in-born desire to experience pleasant things, then an enjoyable learning experience is the most natural approach to education. It guarantees positive results. The heroine's statement contains this idea. She writes, "denn wir vergessen nur die Sachen gerne, die mit keinem Vergnügen verbunden sind;". (p. 218)

On the other hand, learning that is forced on the student in a rigid mechanical manner has counter-productive results. Sternheim warns a would-be teacher, "Lassen Sie die Hand ja niemals zu strengen Drohen, sondern allein zu freundlichen Winken erheben!" (p. 218) She cautions that a preoccupation with forced learning at the expense of the individual's natural love of pleasure could have serious consequences for his or her moral development.

The teacher must use intuition to individualize the lessons in order to best profit the students. The heroine suggests that the examination of the physical phenomenon

of snow be accompanied by a discussion of "das Vergnügen einer Schlittenfahrt." (p. 217) because the girls would be able to identify with this activity and therefore better appreciate the lesson.

The teacher's encouragement also contributes to an atmosphere highly conducive to learning. Sternheim mentions the importance of a "zärtlichen rührenden Ton". (p. 217) Tolerance and patience complement this tone. Sternheim warns: "Unterbrechen Sie selbige ja nicht durch irgendeine ernste oder mißvergnügte Miene; sondern zeigen Sie, daß Sie gerne ihre verschiedenen Gedanken anhörten." (p. 217) The word "verschiedenen" also reflects the individual nature of this learning process.

As was mentioned in the introduction to this theme, the views on education in Sternheim are mostly conventional and as such, are representative of the "Aufklärung". LaRoche still appears to prefer the society-oriented role of education to one that is more personalized. However those few individual qualities she allows into the learning experience on a small scale, point to a more unconventional attitude. It is not yet the world of Werther, but one step away from an exclusively rigid, rational outlook on education.

1.3.3 Love and Marriage

a) Love

Two diametrically opposed conceptions of love exist side by side in the novel, one being more reason-oriented and the other more emotion-oriented. The two brothers, Lord Rich and Lord Seymour illustrate these concepts respectively while Sternheim incorporates a combination of both.

The "Aufklärung" stereotype of selfish, physical passion as presented in the figures of the immoral prince and the villain Lord Derby, will not be included in the present discussion.

The love based on reason is characterized by a firm foundation of moral considerations. This type of love, which is inherently durable and steadfast, results from deep mutual respect. It also incorporates a high regard for the virtuous qualities of the beloved.

Sternheim values this love as the ideal and refers to it as true love in the following description: "Die Achtung für die guten Neigungen meines Herzens und für die Bemühungen meines Geistes, um Talente zu sammeln, dieses allein rührt mich, weil ich es für ein Zeichen einer gleichgestimmten Seele und der wahren dauerhaften Liebe halte " (p. 153) Love

fostered by insincerity and a base of superficiality, and strong passion is distasteful to the heroine. She is not moved by it as she is aware of its selfish origin:

"Schönheit und Witz haben keine Gewalt über mein Herz . . . eine feurige Leidenschaft und zärtliche Reden auch nicht;

am wenigsten aber die Lobeserhebungen meiner persönlichen Annehmlichkeiten; denn da sehe ich in meinem Liebhaber nichts als die Liebe seines Vergnügens." (p. 153)

This love requires the traditionally sanctioned roles for male and female. The male, as suitor, initiates the love interest while the female is expected to remain passive until a reaction is acceptable. Sternheim's mother voices this principle, "daß ein Mädchen nicht ungebeten lieben darf." (p. 34)

Self-control and reason are in the forefront here. Although emotions are involved, they exist in a moderated, restrained form. Lord Rich professes this rational love for Sternheim, a love which typifies the "Aufklärung" ideal of feeling controlled by reason. Balance is the key. He describes it as "die Leidenschaft eines fünf = und vierzigjährigen Mannes, die durch die Vernunft in sein Herz gebracht wurde, alle Kräfte meiner Erfahrung, meiner Kenntnis der Menschen bestärken sie." (p. 235)

Stability characterizes this view of love. It is not subject to the erratic waxing and waning of interest but remains on a constant plane, reflecting balance and maturity. Lord Rich's love contains this quality. He says, "meine Liebe war von der Art Anhänglichkeit, welche ein edeldenkender Mann für Rechtschaffenheit, Weisheit und Menschenliebe fühlt." (p. 262)

Inherent in the nature of this love is the ability to control or suppress it according to the dictates of logic

and necessity. It is tied to the principle of "Gelassenheit". LaRoche demonstrates this view in Lord Rich's noble action of abandoning his quest for Sternheim's hand. Motivated by reason, he steps back in order that his brother might find the health and happiness that he desperately needs. He rationalizes, "Aber ich ersticke meine Wünsche auf ewig. Mein Bruder soll leben! - Seine Seele kann den Verlust ihrer Hoffnungen nicht noch einmal ertragen; meine Jahre und Erfahrung werden mir durchhelfen. Seymour muß das Maß der Zufriedenheit voll haben, sonst genießt er nichts, mir reicht ein Teil davon zu, dessen Wert ich kenne." (p. 271)

Because of its rational foundation, this love is easily transformed into friendship. Lord Rich, aware of his brother's need for the fulfillment of his passionate love for Sternheim, subdues the romantic element of his feelings. He now professes friendship for his former beloved. This smooth transition is strongly reminiscent of the situation in Gellert's Leben der Schwedischen Gräfin von G. in which the heroine, on assuming the death of her first husband, marries his best friend. However after a long absence the former returns and the latter retreats to the comfortable role of family friend. No jealousy or negative feelings mar the relationship of this triangle. In the same manner, Lord Rich makes the transition from suitor to brother-in-law with the result of a friendship more valuable than love. LaRoche depicts this new friendship as highly successful and unproblematic. Lord Rich claims,

"ihre Freundschaft ist zärtlicher als die Umarmungen der Liebe einer andern Person." (p. 275) Its kinship to reason appears greater than that of love and consequently it demands great respect and admiration. LaRoche presents its image as a pure and noble ideal. She conveys this picture in Sternheim's words to Lord Rich: "niemals hat die Vernunft für die Liebe gegen die Freundschaft gesprochen; Sie besitzen den höchsten Grad dieser edlen Neigung in meinem Herzen;" (p. 235)

The second type of love has as its focus, the realm of feeling. It achieves a more romantic tone than the above version by its "love at first sight" quality and presents a strong contrast to the first view of love which grows slowly out of a steady nourishment of reason. Sternheim feels a tenderness for Seymour even before their first meeting based on information about his character. She writes to Emilia, "Sie sagen, ich höre es: Warum ältere Freundin? Waren Sie denn auch schon seine Freundin, Sie, die ihn erst eine halbe Stunde gesehen hatten? Ja, meine liebe Emilia, ich war seine Freundin, eh ich ihn sah;" (p. 67) On seeing him, her feelings are further heightened by his physical and spiritual attributes. At their first meeting she experiences a "Verwirrung." (p. 67) She is moved by his appearance, by the "etwas Melancholisches gedämpfte Feuer seiner schönen Augen" (p. 66) and by the "tiefsinnige Traurigkeit, mit welcher er sich an den Pfeiler des Fensters setzte." (p. 67)

What LaRoche describes here is the first inner stirring of love's passion. Seymour too, is attacked by this overpowering romantic phenomenon of "love at first sight". Towards the end of the novel, upon reading his letters, Sternheim discovers, "er liebte mich zärtlich, rein, von dem ersten Tage, da er mich sah." (p. 272)

This view of love appeals to the heart, to individual feelings and desires. When Derby, the villain, declares his "love" for Sternheim, she confesses, "Aber nicht eine Saite meines Herzens hat darauf geantwortet." (p. 153) As for Seymour's love, it lies secure within her for she strongly yearns for him. She expresses this desire in her heart; "Und war er nicht der Mann, den mein Herz sich wünschte?" (p. 272)

The heart is stronger than the mind here but it does not yet have the supreme monopoly over the individual as it does in the Romantic movement. The individual is not rigidly bound to a sense of duty or obligation. Instead, he is moved by personal considerations based on non-rational elements. It was pointed out above how Sternheim's love feelings for Seymour are brought into play by his tendency to melancholy and sadness. Her heart is moved by the deep emotional qualities which emanate from his character by means of his eyes and physical movements.

The inner desire of the individual defies the reasoning of what is rationally expected. This is completely

the opposite to the love professed by Lord Rich. Sternheim claims to value this love which Rich describes and consequently she realizes the valid reasons for loving her "husband". In her situation with Derby, she rationally concludes, that love is a duty and an obligation which she owes him. "Ich wählte ihn, ich übergab ihm mein Wohl, meinen Ruhm, mein Leben; ich bin ihm mehr Ergebenheit und mehr Dank schuldig, als ich meinem Gemahl unter andern Umständen schuldig wäre." (p. 177) Yet, whatever she proclaims, she translates her words into antagonistic feelings, for even her mind cannot control her heart's desire. As a result, she is unable to do what is rationally expected of her, to offer Derby the dutiful love of a wife. Her inability to suppress her strong love for Seymour interferes with her obligation. It is so marked, that even Derby recognizes it and despairs, "warum zeigtest du mir deine sympathetische Neigung zu Seymour." (p. 179)

The possessor of this emotion-based love is not free to exercise his will since this type of love cannot be suppressed on demand. If not given an outlet for expression, it turns its force inward and flourishes at the expense of the lover's emotional stability. LaRoche illustrates this phenomenon in both Sternheim and Seymour. As mentioned above, the heroine owes Derby marital love but instead of fulfilling this duty, nourishes a heightened feeling of love for Seymour. Seymour, too, is powerless to suppress his love for Sternheim. It torments him endlessly and its

unceasing force is aptly depicted in his reference to it as "das stumme Wüten meiner unüberwindlichen Liebe." (p. 167)

The irrational element of excessive feeling accompanies this view of love where love is experienced as an intense, ungovernable emotional force. It is characterized by a total lack of moderation. Derby puts into words the extreme extent of the passion that both he and Seymour feel for the heroine: "Wir liebten sie beide zum Unsinn " (p. 260)

No temperate resignation is able to co-exist with this force of love. Its intense passion occupies the whole being and subsequently demands the attainment of the love object for its fulfillment. Seymour, unlike his brother Rich, is victim to this heightened irrational state. While his brother conforms to the nature of rational love and abandons his romantic feelings for Sternheim, Seymour's emotional love becomes a matter of life and death. He must have her in order to survive. The following words reflect his desperate condition: "Meine Gesundheit leidet schon lang auf allerlei Weise unter diese Liebe . . . - O Gott! - Ich muß sie erhalten oder sterben - ". (p. 105)

In discussing the love based on reason, it was mentioned how LaRoche displays the importance of the traditional roles for male and female. However, she simultaneously alludes to a more modern concept of love in which the female's role is more liberal and not as confined. This delicate subject is approached lightly,

by means of a rhetorical question between Sternheim and Emilia. The former asks the latter, "Warum darf ein edeldenkendes, tugendhaftes Mädchen nicht zuerst sagen, diesen würdigen Mann liebe ich? Warum vergibt man ihr nicht, wenn sie ihm zu gefallen sucht und sich auf alle Weise um seine Hochachtung bemühet?" (pp. 228-229) This suggestion is quite antagonistic to the idea that it is solely the man's prerogative to choose and initiate the love interest. Wieland is clearly piqued by this aggressive proposal. By no means does he support the removal of the dividing line between the sexes in this regard. He bases his argument on the necessity of a sex-differentiated morality and replies to LaRoche's implication: "Diese Frage ist eben nicht schwer zu beantworten: das edeldenkende, tugendhafte Mädchen darf dies nicht, weil man keine eigene Moral für sie machen kann." (p. 229)

b) Marriage

There lies a certain ambivalence in LaRoche's treatment of the institution of marriage. At times she suggests a more progressive outlook which is then negated by the presentation of a traditional attitude.

Outlining the traditional direction is the idea that marriage is an integral part of the natural course of events in a woman's life. Consequently, the female is ever conscious of its supreme importance. Baron P's sister, Charlotte, illustrates this traditional concern for the value of marriage in voicing her opinion on the future

implications of her sister's marriage to a member of a lower class: "diese schöne Verbindung auf Unkosten meines Glücks gemacht wird. . . . Wer wird denn unser Haus zu einer Vermählung suchen, wenn die ältere Tochter so verschleudert ist?" (p. 37) She believes her happiness is tied to the guarantee of an eventual marriage.

Sternheim's following words reflect the importance of marriage for a woman. In a conversation with Madam C, a widow, the heroine tries to convince her to select a marriage partner from among her four suitors. However she is unsuccessful and as a result, admonishes her for her decision not to marry. Madam C wishes to devote her energies to the teaching of young women and although it is a noble aim, LaRoche does not give it equal status to the aim of matrimony. Sternheim uses the word "Schaden" to describe the detrimental imbalance which Madam C risks by not adhering to what is rationally expected of her. Referring to her desire to educate, Sternheim replies, "Dieses wird das einzige Mittel sein, womit Sie den Schaden ersetzen können, welchen Sie durch den Vorsatz verursachen, unverheiratet zu bleiben." (p. 221)

Simultaneously, the novel presents a situation in which marriage is not regarded as the ultimate female ambition. The figures of Lady Summers and Madam Hills illustrate the possibility of women leading fulfilled, useful and contented lives in spite of their unmarried state. Not only are these two women unattached but they

exhibit no desire nor intention to alter their situation. Sternheim, on the other hand, does eventually marry. Yet LaRoche allows her a long, unhurried celibate period in which educational and humanitarian concerns become the focal point in her life.

LaRoche speaks out for a new kind of marriage. The traditional idea of a parental arrangement based on considerations of convenience is replaced by the freedom of individual choice. Sternheim herself presents this idea when she suggests to Madam C, "aus freiem Willen jemanden glücklich zu machen." (p. 205)

Sternheim's parents follow this new trend. Their marriage is mutually agreed upon by both partners before the consent of all the family members is requested. Speaking for his sister, Sternheim's mother, Baron P tells the Oberst von Sternheim, "Sie sollen mein Bruder sein! - . . . Sie haben die freiwillige, die zärtliche Zusage meiner Schwester - " (p. 35) Then, after being asked her opinion on the matter, Sternheim's grandmother replies to Baron P: "Ich sehe wohl, mein Sohn, daß diese Verbindung eine schon beschlossene Sache ist . . . " (p. 38)

Even the restrictions of social class give way to allow for a marriage of reciprocal love. Sternheim's parents marry in spite of a difference in social class. The heroine's mother shows a strong desire for the union without any consideration for Oberst von Sternheim's lower social origins. She confides in her brother, Baron P, "daß der

Oberste der einzige Mann auf Erden ist, dessen Gemahlin ich zu werden wünsche." (p. 33) To the Baron's question, "Der Unterschied der Geburt ist dir also nicht anstößig?" (p. 33) She replies, "Gar nicht; . . ." (p. 33)

Mutual love is the focus of the marriage between the heroine and Seymour. He experiences the same deep longing for her as she for him. Sternheim becomes aware of this and tells Emilia, "Lord Seymour verfolgt mein Herz; er liebte mich, O meine Emilia," (p. 272)

The heroine's own actions incorporate this progressive view of marriage. She chooses to marry Seymour based on the longings of her heart. When debating on whether to marry Rich or Seymour, she reflects on the latter, "Und war er nicht der Mann, den mein Herz sich wünschte? Er weiß es, soll ich nun zurücke?" (p. 272) Their marriage reflects the important new role of feeling with the marital union. Although Sternheim refers to her marriage to Seymour as "eine Entschließung, die von Tugend, Weisheit und Rechtschaffenheit gebilliget wird!" (p. 274), it is clear from her previous words that emotional elements are present in her decision.

1.3.4 Social Issues

In her novel, LaRoche incorporates some of the social issues of her time. This discussion will consider her views on class structure and social reform. The ideas she presents in the characters Sternheim and the Oberst von Sternheim involve a mixture of rational and emotional, as well as traditional and progressive attitudes.

LaRoche accepts the status quo of the class system as part of the natural order of things. It is part of a rational plan imposed on man by the Creator. This plan includes a God-given reason for the necessity of a society based on different social classes, i.e. the achievement of an ordered world. Sternheim recognizes and values the importance of the "Ordnung, die Gott unter den Menschen durch die Verschiedenheit der Stände eingesetzt hat." (p.137)

The contentment of each class with its naturally designated place and role in society is regarded as an ideal state. This demands the individual's respect for the wisdom of the Almighty, the architect of the social order. Since it is a product of His hand, then logically, it must be good and noble. Just as God created the world of nature where each element is integrated into the whole system with its specific function, so He structured man's social world along a similar pattern. Sternheim, in advising Madam T on the instruction of her children, includes an emphasis on the supreme importance of accepting the natural arrangement of society: "Reden Sie von den Vorteilen und Lasten, die

jede Klasse hat, und lenken Sie alsdann Ihre Kinder zu einer ehrerbietigen Zufriedenheit mit ihrem Schöpfer, der Sie durch die Eltern, die er ihnen gab, zu einem gewissen Stande bestimmte und ihnen darin ein eignes Maß besondrer Pflichten zu erfüllen auflegte " (p. 137).

She prides herself on convincing the nieces of her landlady to be satisfied with their natural God-given station in life, bringing them to the realization, "daß sie sich viel glücklicher achteten, Kammerjungfern als Damen zu sein, weil ich ihnen sehr von der großen Verantwortung sagte, die uns wegen dem Gebrauch unsrer Vorzüge und unsrer Gewalt über andere aufgelegt sei." (p. 176) This statement reveals the importance of not disturbing what is naturally ordained. It would seem unnatural for these lower class girls to be dissatisfied with their social rank and to strive for a higher occupation or standing than what this rank allows for.

No social agitation is promoted in this view for the simple reason that there is absolutely no need for it. If each class has its advantages and disadvantages, both of which have been equally weighed, then a natural harmony should be the result. Every individual has a responsibility to carry out the duties required by his particular social standing. In fact, this must be achieved to ensure a spirit of brotherhood among the various classes. Sternheim's words reflect this principle, as she acknowledges "zu den Pflichten der Tugend und der Religion sei der Fürst wie der

Geringste unter den Menschen verbunden." (p. 137)

LaRoche demonstrates the evolution of the class system as one based on fairness. If one class appears more favoured it is merely because it has achieved more and therefore merits a higher reward. Sternheim's statement indicates that one class is not luckier than another. She explains, "Der Ursprung des Adels wäre kein besonderes Geschenk der Vorsicht, sondern die Belohnung der zum Nutzen des Vaterlandes ausgeübten vorzüglichen Tugenden und Talente gewesen. Der Reichtum sei die Frucht des unermüdeten Fleißes und der Geschicklichkeit " (p. 138). The above idea is another argument for the individual's acceptance of his social status. He is where he is because of the naturally ordered process of reward and punishment. This view would seem to indicate that the only way to improve one's rank is through virtue and diligence and this would entail a slow and steady process.

LaRoche simultaneously presents a contrasting picture to the harmonious world depicted above. It is characterized by the awareness of incongruity and unfairness between the social classes. This awareness of an inequality in the system is, however, not an argument against the status quo but rather an attack on the irresponsibility of the individual. If the social order does not function as a concordant whole, then the fault lies neither with the Creator, nor with His plan, but with the shortcomings of the individual. Reason demands each person's allegiance to

the duties of his rank and failure to achieve this results in an imbalanced world permeated by suffering and unhappiness. It is the lower class in particular which is at the mercy of the attitudes of the higher class. The Oberst von Sternheim realizes this situation and expresses his sympathy for "Geringe und Unglückliche, deren hartes und mühseliges Leben durch die Unbarmherzigkeit und den Stolz der Großen so oft erschwert und verbittert wird." (p. 49)

The natural social structure is no longer portrayed as an ideal system because of the immoral behaviour of the upper class. The lower class is depicted as the target of deliberate oppression by the selfish, abusing nobility. LaRoche presents this view in a dramatic description, as Sternheim recounts with disgust the contents of a conversation she overhears at court : a certain gentleman at the card table "hatte einige Zeit vorher, bei der Frage von Herrschaft und Untertan, von den letztern als Hunden gesprochen und einem Jungen, die Regierung seiner Güter antretenden Kavalier die heftigsten und lieblosesten Maßregeln angeraten, um die Bauren in Furcht und Unterwürfigkeit zu erhalten und die Abgaben alle Jahre richtig einzutreiben, damit man in seinem standesgemäßen Aufwand nicht gestört würde." (p. 78)

LaRoche launches a critique at the privileged classes. The heroine carries this message in her novel. She constantly demonstrates her pity for those of poor station. She focuses on the vast contrast between the rich and poor but this does

not necessarily contradict her rational defense of the necessity of the latter. She believes the lower class has its designated role and purpose, however, that its position deteriorates immensely if not supported by a responsible and caring attitude in the upper class. LaRoche condemns the frivolous amoral lifestyle of the latter as the reason for the misery of the former.

Sternheim vividly depicts the sad situation that arises when one class shirks its responsibility, where the individual's deeds become self-serving and contrary to the natural order. Her statement is quite strong and represents a fairly daring move if one considers the class of the majority of LaRoche's readers. It is at the prince's court that Sternheim vehemently exclaims, "Nein, meine liebe C*, ich werde nicht anders denken, sobald ich die Pracht des Festins, des Hofes, das auf den Spieltischen verschleuderte Gold neben einer Menge Elender, welche Hunger und Bedürfnis in abgezehrten Gesichte und in den zerrißnen Kleidern zeigen, sehen werde! Dieser Kontrast wird meine Seele mit Jammer erfüllen, ich werde mein eignes glückliches Aussehen und das von andern lassen; der Fürst und sein Hof werden mir eine Gesellschaft unmenschlicher Personen scheinen, die ein Vergnügen in dem unermeßlichen Unterschied finden, der zwischen ihnen und denenjenigen ist, die ihrem Übermut zusehen." (p. 72)

LaRoche's novel contains an example of a successful mixed marriage. It is not condoned as a general practice,

however, its existence within the novel reflects a somewhat progressive attitude. In this particular case, individual character compensates for a lower rank in social status. The Oberst von Sternheim, whose family originates in the middle class, is allowed to marry a woman of aristocratic birth. Sternheim's mother's words to Baron P depict it as a marriage of equality : "Sein edles Herz, seine Wissenschaft, und seine Freundschaft für dich ersetzen bei mir den Mangel der Ahnen." (p. 33) This event is all the more interesting as the male's condition is improved by marrying a female. Conversely, the female forfeits her aristocratic name by marrying into a lower class. Although LaRoche allows this phenomenon in an individual instance, she presents a traditional attitude in warning against its general application. Baron P's mother reflects this concern in her admonition: "Lieber Sohn, werde nicht zu eifrig, es wäre wirklich nicht gut, wenn unsre Töchter so leichte geneigt wären, außer Stand zu heiraten." (p. 38)

LaRoche approaches the issue of practical social reform by two widely differing methods. Serious practical philanthropy, as represented by the Oberst von Sternheim, exists simultaneously with a more emotional and spontaneous version as is practised by the heroine, Fräulein von Sternheim.

The first approach involves a rational motivation. Sternheim's father demonstrates the importance of an orderly approach to the implementation of one's social

responsibilities. He incorporates the idea that it is up to the individual to improve on the natural social system. This involves not only organized land reform but also cultivation of the individual. The Oberst von Sternheim suggests, "Ob nicht die Umstände meiner Untertanen in andrer Austeilung der Güter, in Besorgung der Schulen, des Feldbaues und der Viehzucht zu verbessern seien?" (p. 41)

He not only initiates a plan to better the condition of his workers but systematically carries it out: "Alle Proben von Landbau = Verbesserung wurden auf herrschaftlichen Gütern zuerst gemacht; alsdann den Untertanen gelehrt und den Armen . . . der nötige Aufwand umsonst dazu gereicht;". (p. 46) He implements organized division of labour in which each of the following groups serves a specific task and merits certain treatment: "Oberaufseher über Ordnung und Arbeit", "Oberaufseherin", "Hausmeister", "Weibspersonen", "Mannspersonen", "Knechte", "Wächter", "Fremde und einheimische Bettler", "Säufer, Spieler, Ruchlose und Müßiggänger." (pp. 47-48) This comprehensive plan, reflecting his strong sense of social responsibility, becomes a model experiment and a basis of reference for future models. Seymour uses his father-in-law's plan as a guide for his own philanthropic intentions. Sternheim comments, "Mylord will ein Schulhaus und ein Hospital nach der Einrichtung der sternheimischen erbauen lassen;". (p. 276)

The second approach to social reform, the emotional

approach, is highlighted in Sternheim's acts of charity. Her charitable actions are quite the opposite of the methodical philanthropic plans of her father. They are initiated not by deliberate reasoning but by spontaneous feelings. Excursions to the countryside trigger numerous of these subjective experiences. Once, on nearing a group of poverty-stricken inhabitants, Sternheim is suddenly overwhelmed by "Zärtliches Mitleiden" (p. 76), an emotion which incites her to throw them "einige stücke Gelds" (p. 76). On another occasion she describes a similar situation: "Mein Herz wurde bewegt; . . . ich faßte mich, so äußerst gerührt ich war," (p. 101) This feeling is then followed by an instinctive desire to act: "die Vorstellung ihrer Not und die Begierde zu helfen wurde gleich stark." (p. 101) The final result of this episode is a donation of money, "gute Betten, Essen und . . . eine gute Kutsche". (p. 102)

The above outlook is sentimental and emphasizes the happiness of the moment. It is far removed from the serious long-range goals which characterize her father's approach. It makes no provisions or commitments for the future. LaRoche illustrates this lighter tone in the following episode. While outside at the prince's ball, Sternheim is overcome by the contrast of courtly society and the poor inhabitants of the nearby village. Becoming "sehr gerührt" (p. 126), she quickly and spontaneously acts on this feeling: "sobald ich am wenigsten bemerkt wurde, schlüpfte ich in den Pfarrgarten . . . gab dem Pfarrer etwas für

die Armen des Dorfs." (p. 121) This almost playfully described scene results not only in the happiness of the receiver but also in that of the giver. A contented Sternheim returns to her previous activities with "einem glücklichen Herzen" (p. 126).

1.3.5 Metaphysics

The metaphysical realm in the novel comprises two different outlooks; the orthodox and the pietistic. These approaches both complement and contradict one another; however, this discussion is only concerned with the latter effect. The orthodox religious ideas reflect a general rational basis while the pietistic world in the novel is permeated with a personal subjective element which also includes traces of the irrational.

The novel contains a stereotyped picture of orthodox religion. Here the rational presence is displayed in the importance given to formal ritual aspects. Frau von Sternheim's reference to the content of a sermon reveals an emphasis on the tithe: "In der Sonntagspredigt wird der Pfarrer über die Materie von wahren Almosen und von würdigen Armen eine Rede halten und der ganzen Gemeinde die Stiftung und die Pflichten derer . . . vorlesen." (p. 49)

This institutionalized form of religion is society-oriented. The church is an important part of the community and church attendance is an integral part of the general religious program. In Sternheim's description of court life, she includes a reference to the organized external aspect of the church: "Die Hofkirchen sind prächtig geziert, die besten Redner sind zu Predigern darinnen angestellt, die Gottesdienste werden ordentlich und ehrerbietig besucht " (p. 96).

This view of religion necessitates the presence of

the church and a rigid clericalism to guide the path of the believer. It does not promote a personal religious experience but stresses the individual's reliance on his parson and his church. The function of the former in relation to his congregation is reflected in the following statement of Sternheim's: "Wenn mein Pfarrer nur mit guten Bezeugen der letzten Lebensstage seiner Pfarrkinder zufrieden ist, so werde ich sehr unzufrieden mit ihm sein. Und wenn er die Besserung der Gemüter nur durch sogenannte Gesetz = und Strafpredigten erhalten will, ohne den Verstand zu öffnen und zu überzeugen, so wird er auch nicht mein Pfarrer sein.--" (p. 45)

The above words "den Verstand zu öffnen" emphasize a rationalistic orientation. The parson should aim to reach the intellect of his church members since in this outlook, one experiences God via the mind and not the emotions.

Generally accepted dogma is vital to this rationalistic approach to religion. It plays a valuable role, along with the parson and his church, in guiding the individual. Frau von Sternheim claims: "Ich habe mich gründlich von der Güte und dem Nutzen der großen Wahrheiten unsrer Religion überzeugt " (p. 44).

Scholasticism with its roots in academic theology, or "trockene Moral" as Goethe describes it, is a part of the orthodox outlook. Study of the Bible and the Catechism is encouraged here. This idea is reflected in Frau von Sternheim's interest in the "Katechismus . . . nämlich der

von den Christenpflichten, wie er eingeführt ist" (p. 45).

Traces of deism are evident in the novel's orthodox world. The idea that man is able to arrive at proof of God's existence by means of his reason alone is present in Sternheim. Reason directs man to the realization and recognition of God as the Creator of nature and Organizer of the world, i.e. a universal God. Sternheim's words reflect this concept: "Es ist eine Pflicht des guten Geschöpfs, die Werke seines Urhebers zu kennen, von denen wir alle Augenblicke unsers Lebens soviel Gutes genießen; da die ganze physikalische Welt lauter Werke und Zeugnisse der Wohltätigkeit und Güte unsers Schöpfers in sich faßt, deren Anblick und Kenntniss das reinste und vollkommenste, keinem Zufall, keinem Menschen unterworfenen Vergnügen in unsre Seele gießt." (p. 140)

The above idea is linked to the belief in Divine Providence. Man is subject to a God-ordained destiny and a general moral code, where the emphasis lies in the general harmony of the world and not on personal considerations. Sternheim writes about "Schicksal . . . welches uns die Ausschweifungen unsrer Einbildung ohnehin nicht erlaubte." (p. 138) It is everyone's duty to accept this Divine plan and to live according to "dieser edelmütigen Ergebung in ihr Schicksal " (p. 139).

A contrasting picture is created to the one above by a strong pietistic presence in Sternheim. This world is characterized by a subjective quality. The religious

experience is no longer part of a formal general pattern but becomes a personal, emotional encounter. God's existence is not only realized by the intellect but felt by the heart. In addition, the believer's aim is not only to study the religious books but to apply their message.

The personal element in this pietistic orientation allows the individual spontaneous contact with the Almighty. The individual's relationship to God is not limited to ritual prayers and Sunday morning sermons. It becomes natural and voluntary. In the following passage, Sternheim appeals to God in an impulsive personal prayer: "Ich ging ans Fenster, um Atem zu schöpfen, und erhob meine Augen gen Himmel. O Gott, mein Gott, der du alles zuläßt, erhalte mich in diesem Bedrängnis. Was soll ich tun?" (p. 237)

The emotions play a key role in this subjective religious experience. Tears become the symbol for this deep inner life of the soul. After a spontaneous prayer, Sternheim is overcome by tears: "Laß mich, o Vorsicht, laß mich dieses Gepräge der wahren Größe der Seele erhalten; viele, aber milde Tränen überströmten nach diesem Gebet meine Lagerstätte." (p. 238)

The pietist is preoccupied with self-analysis. Sternheim exhibits this trait in her constant reference to the state of her inner self. On one occasion she writes to Emilia, "Sie sehen, daß ich über mich zweifelhaft bin". (p. 205)

This preoccupation also makes itself felt in an

extreme consciousness of sin. The individual, as a result of looking inward, is often stricken with guilt feelings. LaRoche's heroine experiences this many times. In a letter describing her behaviour at a court ball, she writes, "Sein Sie ruhig, meine liebe strenge Freundin, ich empfinde, daß Sie recht haben; ich war eitel und sehr mit mir zufrieden;". (p. 129)

The pietistic evaluation of behaviour illustrated above leads to an expectation of punishment. Sternheim blames herself for being seduced into a false marriage with Derby and consequently feels the marriage is punishment for a weakness in her moral character. She laments, "O wie hart, wie grausam werde ich für den Schritt meiner Entweichung bestraft!" (p. 184)

This religious outlook is further characterized by an aversion to worldliness. It idealizes simple country life with its focus on family, church and work. Sternheim's love of life's simple pleasures and her abhorrence of the artificial fabric of courtly society reflects this.

Practical Christianity is a primary aim of the believer here. Loving one's neighbour becomes more important than studying religious doctrine. However, the feeling of neighbourly love is not sufficient, for it must be transformed into action. Sternheim learns this principle from her father: "Wie einnehmend bewies mein Papa mir diesen Grundsatz, . . . daß gute Handlungen viel ruhmwürdiger sein als die feinsten Gedanken." (p. 94)

The world of pietism concentrates a great deal of its attention on the eventual afterlife. The idea of spiritual reward and punishment motivates the individual to benevolent action. Furthermore, the suffering of the individual in the present physical world is eased by thoughts of ultimate eternal compensation. In a tortured period of her life, Sternheim looks ahead and is thankful for the promise of a life after death: "Gedanke des Todes, wie wohltätig bist du, wenn du von der Versicherung der Unsterblichkeit unserer Seele begleitet, zu uns kömmst! wie lebhaft erweckst du das Gefühl unserer Pflichten, und wie eifrig machst du unsern Willen, Gutes zu tun? Dir dank ich die Überwindung meines Grams und die erneuerten Kräfte der Tugend meiner Seele!" (p. 246)

CHAPTER 2 : DISCUSSION OF THE CRITICS (1771-1982)

2.1 Contemporary Reviews (1771-1775)

Published in 1771, this novel makes a great impact on its readers and rapidly becomes the equivalent of today's best-seller. Brüggemann describes this phenomenal story: " 'Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim' hat eine Aufnahme gefunden, wie sie nicht glänzender hätte sein können. Der Roman hat Sophie LaRoche mit einem Schlage berühmt gemacht und ihr in aller Welt den Namen 'die Sternheim' eingetragen."¹ Its popularity results in a total of nine editions and translations into English, French and Dutch. In her biography of the author, Ludmilla Assing captures the intense furor caused by the novel. In 1859 she writes, "Wir haben in unserer heutigen Literatur keinen Roman, der so auf der Stelle sich alle Herzen erobert hätte, der gleich diesem von so vielen schönen Augen mit Tränen des Entzückens und des Mitgefühls gelesen wäre."² Ridderhoff also highlights the novel's success: "Im übrigen konnte Sophie von LaRoche nur innige Freude über die begeisterte Aufnahme empfinden, die ihrem Roman von allen Seiten zu teil wurde."³ Assing describes it as

¹Fritz Brüggemann, "Einleitung zum Nachdruck von Sophie von LaRoche, Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim," in: Deutsche Literatur. Sammlung literarischer Kunst- und Kultur-denkmäler in Entwicklungsreihen, (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam jun., 1938), bd. 14, p. 7, hereafter cited as Brüggemann.

²Ludmilla Assing, Sophie LaRoche; die Freundin Wielands, (Berlin:1859), p. 143, hereafter cited as Assing,.

³Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XXIII.

"ein Sturm des Beifalls und der Bewunderung."⁴

These rave reviews emanate from two distinctly opposed literary camps: the older, established followers of the "Aufklärung" and the younger representatives of the new irrationalism. Brüggemann alludes to the singularity of this phenomenon. He is puzzled that LaRoche's work captures the favour of such a diverse audience and asks, "Wie erklärt sich nun das Rätsel "⁵.

Both the novel's and the author's success however, do not endure a long and happy life. LaRoche's first and best novel is initially applauded and later criticized by the same groups. Its original popularity stems from its embodiment of elements which reflect both rational and irrational trends at a time when the rationalistic movement was predominant and the Storm and Stress was about to emerge. One could say that its publication is well timed. However, when the transition period is over, the novel no longer appears as vital and stimulating as it once did, but as something mediocre and passé.

Unfortunately, LaRoche remains stagnant and does not progress with the new literary trends. She too, soon fades from view. Goethe, a once ardent admirer, later becomes critical of her talent. On July 24 1799, in a letter to

⁴Assing, p. 143.

⁵Brüggemann, p. 8.

schiller, he refers to her lack of flexibility and to her mediocrity: "Frau von LaRoche habe ich zweimal, erst in Tiefurt, dann in Osmannstädt gesehen und sie eben wie vor zwanzig Jahren gefunden. Sie gehört zu den nivellierenden Naturen, sie hebt das Gemeine herauf und zieht das Vorzügliche herunter".⁶

Wieland, Sternheim's editor, is also its first critic. He presents a "Vorrede" to the first edition of the work published in 1771 and 1772, in which he gives his opinions of the novel. In addition, he makes his presence felt throughout the text in a series of footnotes. These footnotes are actually comments on various statements within the text. (References to the former will be cited as Wieland, "Vorrede": references to the latter will be cited as Wieland, Footnotes.)

Wieland is the force behind LaRoche, the novelist. It is his motivation that inspires LaRoche to write and complete the novel: He explains his strong desire for wanting it published as "da ich dem Verlangen nicht widerstehen konnte, allen tugendhaften Müttern, allen liebenswürdigen jungen Töchtern unsrer Nation ein Geschenk mit einem Werke zu machen, welches mir geschickt schien, Weisheit und Tugend - die einzigen großen Vorzüge der

⁶ Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe, (Berlin: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1892), Bd. 3, p. 230.

Menschheit, die einzigen Quellen einer wahren Glückseligkeit-unter Ihrem Geschlechte, und selbst unter dem meinigen, zu befördern."⁷ In view of Wieland's remark, Brüggemann appears incorrect in his assertion on the novel's reception, "daß der Beifall nicht aus dem Lager der Aufklärung kam".⁸ Wieland, as representative of the "Aufklärung", does find faults in her work, yet in pressing for the novel's publication he clearly demonstrates a strong type of "Beifall".

The content of Wieland's "Vorrede" reflects the contradictory nature of the novel. He praises the elements which are allied to his rational views but is at the same time painfully aware of new qualities which conflict with his views.

Wieland feels LaRoche's novel has mainly an instructive aim: "wobei überhaupt die moralische Nützlichkeit der erste Zweck, die Ergötzung des Lesers hingegen nur eine Nebenabsicht ist."⁹ He praises the qualities of the heroine that reflect a picture of reason and virtue. They include, "diese ungeschminkte Aufrichtigkeit der Seele, diese sich immer gleiche Güte, dieses zarte Gefühl des Wahren und Schönen, diese aus einer inneren Quelle

⁷Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 20.

⁸Brüggemann, p. 7.

⁹Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 23.

stammende Ausübung jeder Tugend".¹⁰

Wieland also acknowledges and lauds the following new elements in the novel: "eine gewisse Originalität der Bilder und des Ausdrucks"¹¹ and "diese völlige Individualisierung des Charakters unserer Heldin".¹² However not all of the novel's new qualities are treated positively. Wieland categorizes those elements he sees as conflicting with his rational outlook as "Zwanzig kleine Mißtöne".¹³ He displays an apologetic attitude towards their presence in what he feels is basically a novel of the "Aufklärung" genre. He insists to LaRoche that his criticisms and footnotes are solely to protect her from the brutality of other critics. His footnotes often attempt to rationalize or explain passages in the novel.

One of Wieland's main criticisms is directed at LaRoche's use of exaggerated feelings or behaviour, i.e. "Schwärmerei", in the heroine's character. He refers to it as "der sonderbare und an das Enthusiastische angrenzende Schwung in der Denkensart Ihrer Sternheim".¹⁴ In an attempt to downplay this irrational quality in LaRoche's novel, he describes the heroine as not a typical representative

¹⁰Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 21.

¹¹Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 23.

¹²Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 24.

¹³Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 21.

¹⁴Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 21.

of her class, stating "daß es eben daher komme, daß sie so oft anders denkt und handelt als die meisten Personen ihres Standes;".¹⁵

He demonstrates his dissatisfaction with this trait of exaggeration in one of his footnotes. It concerns the melodramatic scene in which a shaken and emotional Sternheim calls attention to herself by tearing up part of her costume and tearfully rushing out of the ballroom. Her rash behaviour is prompted by her discovery of a set-up in which she is obviously designated as the prince's mistress. Derby describes the scene and the criticisms directed at the heroine's behaviour by the rest of the court: "Fast bei allen wurde die Aufführung des Fräuleins als ein übertriebenes Geziere getadelt. 'Mann kann tugendhaft sein, ohne ein großes Geräusch zu machen.' " (p. 157) Wieland's comment to all this commotion reads "Und diejenigen, welche dieses sagten, hatten an sich selbst eben nicht so gar unrecht. W."¹⁶ In other words, he agrees with the court's general consensus that Sternheim acts in an exaggerated manner and therefore deserves criticism.

Wieland also finds fault with LaRoche's social criticism, particularly her "Satire über das Hofleben und die große Welt"¹⁷ and the heroine's "beständige Kontrast

¹⁵Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 24.

¹⁶Wieland, Footnotes, p. 157.

¹⁷Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 25.

den ihre Art zu empfinden, zu beurteilen und zu handeln mit dem Geschmack, den Sitten und Gewohnheiten der großen Welt macht."¹⁸

In a footnote to the following statement of Derby's, his displeasure of the author's intended critique of "die Staatsgeschäfte der Höfe" (p. 103) is evident. Derby expresses a view which questions the ability and integrity of those in political positions. He states: "der Zufall tut bei vielen das meiste, und die Weisheit manches Ministers besteht allein darin, durch die Kenntniss der Geschichte der vergangenen und gegenwärtigen Staaten, diesen Augenblick des Zufalls zu benutzen und die übrige Welt glauben zu machen, daß es die Arbeit seiner tiefen Einsichten gewesen sei ." (p. 103)

Wieland tries to justify the position of those attacked by Derby. He opposes the latter's position, regarding the officials as just and capable and finding the citizens responsible for making their own lives miserable. He replies "Es gehöret immer noch viele Einsicht dazu, den Zufall so wohl zu benutzen, und vielleicht mehr, als einen wohl ausgedachten Entwurf zu machen. Aber das ist der große Haufe nicht fähig zu begreifen: und daher pflegt man ihn immer gerne glauben zu lassen, was, seinen Begriffen nach, denen, die ihn regieren, die meiste Ehre macht. Die Welt wird nur darum so viel betrogen, weil sie

¹⁸Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 24.

betrogen sein will. Anm. v. Wieland."¹⁹

Other criticisms are directed at LaRoche's negligence of form, style and literary rules. Wieland attacks her method, "weniger auf die Schönheit der Form, als auf den Wert des Inhalts aufmerksam zu sein;"²⁰ He further charges her with "die Nachlässigkeit des Stils, das Ungewöhnliche einiger Redensarten und Wendungen, und überhaupt den Mangel einer vollkommenen Abglättung und Rundung".²¹

In another footnote, Wieland shows awareness of LaRoche's highly emotional language. Rather than directly criticizing it, he rationalizes its presence. It concerns a conversation in which the heroine is giving advice to a friend about a future marriage candidate. Sternheim's speech progresses from a cool objective tone to an involved personal pitch and this sparks Wieland's comment. He notes, "Der ziemlich ins Preziöse fallende und von der gewöhnlichen schönen Simplizität unsrer Sternheim so stark abstechende Stil dieser Dialogen scheint zu beweisen, daß sie bei dieser Unterredung mit Frau von C. nicht recht à son aise war."²²

Wieland is not the only member of the "Aufklärung" to express his opinions on Sternheim, yet his comments are by

¹⁹Wieland, Footnotes, p. 103.

²⁰Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 23.

²¹Wieland, "Vorrede", p. 23.

²²Wieland, Footnotes, p. 206.

far the most extensive and radical. Aside from isolated remarks by other writers of this group, Karl August Musäus is the only other contemporary "Aufklärung" critic to give a more detailed report of LaRoche's novel. His report is found in the form of an article written in Nicolai's "Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek" in 1772. As the article is signed Sr, other critics such as Ridderhoff and Brüggemann assume it to be Sulzer's work. However this is not the case. G. Parthey's compilation, "Die Mitarbeiter an Friedrich Nicolai's Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek" published in 1842, reveals the true identity of Sr as Karl August Musäus.

Musäus has mainly compliments for LaRoche's work. Although he, like Wieland, finds faults in the novel, he does not criticize them as sharply as the former.

The element of "Schwärmerei" which Wieland decries is here condoned as a necessary part of the heroine's character development: "Aber in Ansehung dieses Punktes möchten wir lieber die V. rechtfertigen, als ihr einen Vorwurf machen."²³ Instead of regarding this quality as a deficiency in Sternheim's personality, Musäus believes it has a valid place in the novel. In his view, the above trait is intimately linked to Sternheim's role as a heroic character. Musäus adopts Wieland's personal formulation

²³Musäus, p. 474.

of this element, "der sonderbare an das enthusiastische angränzende Schwung in der Denkungsart der Sternheim"²⁴, and mentions Wieland's aversion to it.

Musäus, like Wieland, is impressed by the "gesunde Moral"²⁵ and by "die moralische Nützlichkeit ihres Plans"²⁶ which he regards as the focus of the novel. However he wishes that its presence in the novel had not been upstaged by the unusual exaggeration of events which he labels "das Wunderbare der Begebenheiten".²⁷

Musäus comments further on LaRoche's unique art of characterization. He mentions "diese Originalität des Charakters"²⁸ in a negative tone but clearly not in Wieland's vigorous manner. For him, the peculiarity of Sternheim is excusable by virtue of her British origins. What Wieland sees as bad taste in her character, he partly condones as part of the exotic extension of her heritage.

Musäus finds only a few minor flaws in LaRoche's presentation of the heroine. He sees Sternheim as guilty of rash misjudgement and action in her flight with Derby and suggests an alternate behaviour: "Wenn sie es für nothwendig hielt, aus O. zu entfliehen, warum ging sie

²⁴Musäus, p. 474.

²⁵Musäus, p. 474.

²⁶Musäus, p. 474.

²⁷Musäus, p. 475.

²⁸Musäus, p. 475.

nicht auf ihre Güter, wo sie für allen Nachstellungen des Fürsten in Sicherheit war?"²⁹

Another fault he finds in the heroine is her "falsche Delicatesse".³⁰ First he condemns this quality of false modesty which prompts her to deny Derby "Gefälligkeiten, zu welchen er in der Qualität eines Gemahls berechtigt war,".³¹ Then he softens his position and reasons that the author has no choice but to portray Sternheim that way: "Das einzige Mittel war einer solchen Situation, aus der die Heldin nicht mit Ehren konnte gezogen werden, auszuweichen."³²

His review contains the following sexist outlook. He states his support for Sternheim's "guten moralischen und philosophischen Betrachtungen"³³ but emphasizes their weakened impact on the reader due to the sex of the heroine. Instead of LaRoche's serious intellectual tone he advises the use of a "leichten naiven Ausdruck"³⁴ in keeping with "die Briefe eines Frauenzimmers".³⁵

²⁹Musäus, p. 476.

³⁰Musäus, p. 477.

³¹Musäus, p. 477.

³²Musäus, p. 477.

³³Musäus, p. 477.

³⁴Musäus, p. 477.

³⁵Musäus, p. 477.

Musäus, like Wieland, notes a problem of language in the novel. He cites a couple of "Sprachfehler"³⁶ and mentions the presence of emotionally tinged words such as "Jast von Leidenschaften, Spleen und dergleichen".³⁷ However he does not judge her harshly, calling her vocabulary flaws "Kleinigkeiten, die bey dem übrigens korrekten Ausdruck leicht zu ubersehen sind."³⁸

His final conclusion of the novel is, like Wieland's, favourable. Expressing his regard for LaRoche's work at the end of his review, he states "Mit Vergnügen merken wir hier noch an, daß in der bibliothèque des Sciences et des beaux arts eine französische Uebersetzung dieser Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternh. angekündigt ist, wir wünschen nur, daß sie in gute Hände fällt, um wirklich übersetzt und nicht etwan travestirt zu werden."³⁹

The new qualities of LaRoche's novel which Wieland tolerates only because of the redeeming rational elements, become the focus of the young members of the new irrational movement. This younger generation refuses to accept any criticism directed at the novel by the older established writers of the Aufklärung, particularly by Wieland. The latter's criticisms stand in sharp contrast to the

³⁶Musäus, p. 479.

³⁷Musäus, p. 479.

³⁸Musäus, p. 479.

³⁹Musäus, p. 479.

enthusiastic and delirious popularity the novel received in the ranks of the former. It could be that Wieland's use of the word "Mißtöne" in his review of the novel, restricted what might have been a more enthusiastic applause in the "Aufklärung" group to a restrained type of ovation.

The younger writers however, react freely and overwhelmingly positively towards the novel, especially to the individual and emotional qualities which are labelled as faults by the older generation. Werner Milch aptly catches the key attractions for the young group: "hier fand sie die Darstellung seelischer Kämpfe, die mutige Gestaltung aktueller Fragen - Erziehungsreform, Selbstständigkeit der Frau, Bekenntnis zum Gefühlsleben."⁴⁰

Herder's views are indicative of the general reaction of the young writers, "denn er ist der Wortführer der neuen Schule."⁴¹ He is overcome with praise for LaRoche's art of characterization, for her emotional tone and for her true-to-life depictions. In a letter to Merck on November 16, 1771, he includes the following compliments: "die Situation mit Derby als Ehemann, mit Seymour wie er sich ins Kopfküssen wickelt, mit Rich, der ihre Seele erräth, u. a. sind ausserdem meisterhaft, so wie die Todtenstimme aus den Bleigebirgen mir rührender als Hiob tönt. Für mich aber

⁴⁰ Milch, p. 110.

⁴¹ Wilhelm Spickernagel, Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim von Sophie von LaRoche und Goethes Werther, Diss. Greifswald 1911, p. 25, hereafter cited as Spickernagel.

muss ich sagen, hat diese vortreffliche Frau die meisten sonderbaren Wirkungen, wenn ihre Personen: Sternheim, Seymour, Rich u.s.w. . . . ihre Lieblingsgedanken, kleine Bemerkungen, Aussichten aufs Leben, süsse Blicke der Seele verrathen; in diesem Allem ist sie für mich einzig und weit mehr als Clarissa mit allen ihren herausgewundenen Situationen und Thränen."⁴²

Herder is moved by the inner life which LaRoche emphasizes in her characters. His preoccupation with the feelings elicited by the heroine is clearly expressed in his letter of June 1771 to Caroline Flachsland, his fiancée. He exclaims "So haben Sie die Sternheim so gefühlt, und eben so gefühlt! o gemeinschaftlicher Schutzgeist unseres Lebens, wenn wir sie einst zusammen lesen werden!"⁴³

So greatly affected is Herder by LaRoche's strong portrayal of deep emotional and moral forces that it influences the contents of his sermons. Natalie Halpern describes its effect: "Als Herder den Roman zum ersten Male gelesen, ist er so ergriffen worden von dem 'durchgehenden Dämmernden, Dunkeln und moralisch Rührenden' daß er 'durchaus von nichts Anderem predigen konnte, als daß es

⁴²J.G. Herder, Briefe, hrsg. v. W. Dobbek und A. Günter, (Weimar: Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, 1977), bd.2, p. 106, hereafter cited as Herder, Briefe.

⁴³Aus Herders Nachlaß, hrsg. v. H. Düntzer und F.G. Herder, (Frankfurt a.M: Meißner, 1856-57; rpt. Hildesheim: G. Ohms Verlag, 1916), bd.3, pp:67-68, hereafter cited as Nachlaß.

unglückliche Schritte gebe, die man nachher lebenslang nicht zurückholen könnte und was man nun thun sollte'.⁴⁴

LaRöche's novel moves Herder to experience a religious conversion. He admits, "Ich habe Buße getan auf mein ganzes Leben".⁴⁵ He finds its message so relevant that he compares it to the Bible: "so sind mir diese eingestreute Betrachtungen gleichsam lauter Evangelien".⁴⁶

Caroline Flachsland, one of the most "empfindsam" writers of that time period, recognizes the novel's emotional qualities. She displays a similar subjective experience as her fiancé Herder on reading the novel. She bemoans the vast abyss separating her from Sternheim, her ideal: "mein ganzes Ideal von einem Frauenzimmer! Sanft, zärtlich, wohlthätig, stolz und tugendhaft und betrogen . . . Ach, wie weit bin ich noch von meinem Ideal, von mir selbst weg! welche Berge stehen getürmt vor mir! ach! ach!, ich werde im Staub und in der Asche bleiben! -".⁴⁷

Other members of the new irrationalism are swift to expose their support of the novel. Lenz is probably one of its most enthusiastic fans. Overcome with excitement by

⁴⁴Natalie Halpern, Die deutschen Schriftstellerinnen in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts, Diss. Frankfurt a.M. 1935, p. 16.

⁴⁵Herder, Briefe, p. 102.

⁴⁶Herder, Briefe, p. 101.

⁴⁷Nachlaß, pp. 67-68.

LaRoche's depiction of emotion, he hails the heroine as a feminine Werther in his dramatic piece "Pandämonium Germanicum".

In Act 2, Scene 4, he criticizes Wieland, whom he despises for his critical footnotes in the novel. His attack on Wieland is as pronounced as his fervour for LaRoche's excellence. In this scene Goethe issues the scathing remark, "Errötest du nicht Wieland? verstummst du nicht? Kannst du ein Lob ruhig anhören, das soviel Schande über dich zusammenhäuft?"⁴⁸ Lenz shows no mercy for Wieland whom he blames for wanting to take credit for influencing LaRoche's novel. It is Sternheim, the author, to whom he gives full credit for writing the novel and to whom he has male admirers in his drama cry out "Sternheim wenn du einen Werther hättest, tausend Leben müßten ihm nicht zu kostbar sein."⁴⁹

Lenz not only idealizes the heroine but the author herself. He is smitten by LaRoche who so touched his inner emotions. In a letter written to her on May 1, 1775, he thanks her for the profusion of tears he shed as a result of Sternheim: "Liebe gnädige Frau! Der Himmel belohne Sie! Wäre es auch nur für all die wollüstigen Tränen, die Sie

⁴⁸ J.M.R. Lenz, "Pandämonium Germanicum" in: J.M.R. Lenz Werke und Schriften, hrsg. v. B. Titel und H. Haug, (Stuttgart: Henry Goverts Verlag GmbH, 1967), bd.2, p. 269, hereafter cited as Lenz.

⁴⁹ Lenz, p. 269.

mir haben aus den Augen schwärmen machen, und in denen die ganze Welt um mich her verschwand."⁵⁰

Others in this group express admiration for the novel but not always in the superlative tones of a Herder or Lenz. Brüggemann describes the reaction of Bode and Stolberg: "Von Bode wissen wir, daß er 'seit langem nichts gelesen, was sein Herz so tief bewegt und angezogen' hatte, Fritz Stolbergs Grundstimmung dem Roman gegenüber war Rührung."⁵¹ They too demonstrate the influence of the novel's emotional impact. They perceive its message primarily through their hearts and not their minds.

Julie Bondeli, a friend and literary penpal of LaRoche's, expresses the novel's favourable reception in Bern, Switzerland. In classifying Sternheim, she places it above Richardson's Clarissa and compliments the healthy relationship between "Genie und Gefühl" in the work.

By far the most prominent and enduring of the novel's contemporary reviews comes from the pages of the "Frankfurter Gelehrten Anzeigen" Vol. 7, 1772. This literary journal, edited by Goethe, Herder and Merck, is the official mouthpiece of the new movement. On February 14, 1772 it contains a glowing evaluation of LaRoche's Sternheim. Goethe is generally acknowledged to be its author, although

⁵⁰F. Waldmann, "Lenz in Briefen," Euphorion, bd.3, (1896), p. 530.

⁵¹Brüggemann, p. 7.

some critics like Spickernagel, Ridderhoff and Touaillon suggest that it might be Merck who wrote the comments.

The article focuses positively on the subjective element of the novel. It singles out the most emotional and dramatic scenes for praise: "Das Journal im Bleygebürge ist vor uns die Ergießung des edelsten Herzens in den Tagen des Kummers"⁵² This part of the novel highlights the deep torment of the heroine and is characterized by dramatic displays of emotional suffering. These are exactly the same scenes which most affect Herder.

The article places LaRoche's individual and natural character portrayal far above Richardson's presentation. The heroine's character, with its emphasis on the inner life of the soul, reflects the strong tendency of these young writers towards irrationalism. The kinship they feel with this new type of heroine is reflected in the following words. This passage received great popularity because its author was thought to be Goethe. It reads, "Allein alle die Herren irren sich, wenn sie glauben, sie beurtheilen ein Buch--es ist eine Menschenseele; und wir wissen nicht, ob diese vor das Forum der großen Welt, des Ästhetikers, des Zeloten, und des Kritikers gehört."⁵³ At the same time, the above

⁵² FGA, p. 86.

⁵³ FGA, p. 85.

statement incorporates an attack at the established "Aufklärung" members, most notably Wieland. These young writers consider his rational rules as being pedantic and without appreciation of a fragile "Menschenseele".

The novel's popularity within two opposing camps clearly points to a diversity of elements in the novel. Each group sees what it wants to see and takes from the novel what inspires it most. Some advocate the work as "nützlich" and rationally instructive while others hail it as spiritually and emotionally moving. Both sides, the older more rational writers, and those younger and inclined to the new irrationalism, recognize their ideals in Sternheim. Both sides contribute to the immense recognition which the novel received.

LaRoche's novel reproduces the literary spirit of that period, a period in which the "Aufklärung" undergoes transformations and the expression of feeling becomes more prominent while a new era of irrationalism approaches.

Ludmilla Assing describes the free-floating boundaries between the various literary movements of this period: "Die bedeutendsten Geister waren erfüllt von den neuen Strömungen des deutschen Lebens; der Sturm und Drang, das Geniewesen, die Empfindsamkeit, die Physiognomik, die geheimen Bünde, die Illuminaten, die Geisterseherei, die deutsche Union, der Erziehungseifer setzen sie wechselweise in Bewegung. Man suchte eine neue Form für einen neuen

Inhalt, bald mit ernster Klarheit, bald mit träumender Phantasie ".⁵⁴ This picture of confusion and transition is incorporated into Sternheim in a series of contrasting elements.

LaRoche's novel owes part of its great initial success to the time period in which it is published. The time is ripe for the diverse qualities which LaRoche juxtaposes in Sternheim. However great its success, praise of the novel is short-lived and precisely for the same reasons which initiated its early popularity. Touaillon sharply outlines this result: "Auf die Leidenschaftlichen wirkte sie philiströs, den Gelassenen war sie der Leidenschaft verdächtig und schließlich lächelte alles über sie."⁵⁵

⁵⁴Assing, pp. 150-151.

⁵⁵Christine Touaillon, Der deutsche Frauenroman des 18. Jahrhunderts, (Wien : Braumüller, 1919), p. 73.

2.2 Kuno Ridderhoff (1895, 1907)

Kuno Ridderhoff is the first major critic to publish a detailed examination of LaRoche's novel. The title of his book, Sophie von LaRoche, die Schülerin Richardsons und Rousseaus, is indicative of the "Parallelenjagd"¹ pursued in the 19th century by the followers of Wilhelm Scherer. It is patterned on Richardson, Rousseau and Goethe, a work by Erich Schmidt, another member of the "Scherer-Schule". In 1907, twelve years after the publication of his book, Ridderhoff wrote the introduction to a new edition of Sternheim. This discussion will examine the views he presents towards this novel in both his book and in his introduction.

The title of Ridderhoff's work, published in 1895, highlights the foreign presence in LaRoche's writing in a descending order of influence, first Richardson and then Rousseau. He explains the strong English element in her novel: "...andererseits [legt sie] eine solche Vorliebe für England an den Tag, wie sie nur durch ihre eingehende Beschäftigung mit der englischen Literatur, speziell mit Richardson, erklärlich ist."²

¹Rene Wellek, Geschichte der Literaturkritik 1750-1950, bd.3, (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1977), p. 283.

²Kuno Ridderhoff, Sophie von LaRoche, die Schülerin Richardsons und Rousseaus, (Einbeck: J. Schroodter, 1895), p. 27, hereafter cited as Ridderhoff, Sophie.

He basically regards LaRoche's first novel as a synthesis of Richardson's three main novels: Clarissa Howe, Pamela and Grandison. His statement, "Richardson ist es also, dessen Spuren überall zuerst aufzusuchen sind."³, reflects the primary aim of his writing. He presents a careful delineation of the parallels between these two authors. In a direct comparison of their form, motives and characterization, he attempts to depict Sternheim as as "Richardsoniade", a title bestowed on this work by Schmidt. He primarily stresses the parallels between Richardson and LaRoche and only briefly mentions those elements he feels are independent and unique to LaRoche's novel.

Since the book's main thrust is LaRoche's dependence on Richardson, Ridderhoff places LaRoche in an inferior position. He constantly refers to the "Abhängigkeit der LaRoche"⁴ and he phrases his aim as "die LaRoche als von Richardson abhängig hinzustellen"⁵. Richardson is treated as the experienced and superior writer while LaRoche is portrayed as the eager pupil who fails to achieve the perfection of her master.

Ridderhoff carefully delineates LaRoche's shortcomings in her art of characterization. He views Derby as

³Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 8.

⁴Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 3.

⁵Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 27.

less effective a character than Lovelace, his counterpart in Richardson: "Derby ist eine getreue Kopie des Lovelace. Wenn dieser uns trotzdem gewinnt, wo jener uns abstösst, so ist das eine Folge der unendlich viel feineren Charakterzeichnung Lovelaces."⁶ Seymour too, falls short of his role model: "Seymour entspricht ganz einem tugendhaften jungen Edelmann im Richardsonschen Sinne, der, jedoch noch nicht ganz zu der Höhe eines Grandison sich emporgearbeitet hat, da Schmerz und Zorn noch Gewalt über ihn haben."⁷

Ridderhoff highlights the rational qualities of LaRoche's characters. He regards Derby as a rationally stereotyped "getreue Kopie" of Richardson's villain in Clarissa Howe. Both villains serve a rational function: "dass die Heldin dem Verfolger derbe das Unmoralische seiner Denkweise vorwirft,"⁸. Seymour is viewed as a stereotypically virtuous gentleman. However since his character is weakened by an irrational force, Ridderhoff has less respect for him than for his Richardsonian forerunner. He speaks negatively of this weakness "da Schmerz und Zorn noch Gewalt über ihn haben."⁹

⁶Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 20.

⁷Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 20.

⁸Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 25.

⁹Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 20.

In Ridderhoff's examination of the heroine, the rational qualities are given a lot of attention. He labels Sternheim as "völlig eine Richardsonsche Puppe"¹⁰ and perceives her character primarily through her ideas not her emotions. He traces the origin of these ideas to LaRoche's English model: "Jene 'Neigungen und Ideen' sind die Richardsons."¹¹ They involve the concepts of virtue, charity and resignation to one's fate. Ridderhoff lists them all as exemplary qualities in the heroine.

Even the emotional by-products of Sternheim's character are portrayed within a Richardsonian framework and not as new or irrational qualities. "Furcht"¹², "bitteren[n] Worten[n]"¹³, "körperlichen Leiden folgende Erschöpfung Leibes und der Seele"¹⁴ and "Sehnsucht nach dem Tode"¹⁵ are presented as part of a logical pattern shared by both Sternheim and Pamela. The heightened feeling of "Verzweiflung" that LaRoche's heroine experiences is given a rational context. Ridderhoff regards it as an inherent part of the Richardsonian motive; the seduction of the

¹⁰Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 20.

¹¹Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 18.

¹²Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 21.

¹³Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 22.

¹⁴Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 22.

¹⁵Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 22.

virtuous heroine.

Ridderhoff seems to be aware of the contradiction within Sternheim's character. He presents her as both guilty of misconduct, yet innocent and free of any blame for the outcome of events. In a comparison of Clarissa Howe and Sternheim, he makes this observation: "In beiden Romanen trägt die Heldin selbst zum grossen Teile die Schuld an ihrem Unglücke."¹⁶ Further along the same page, he absolves the heroines of any blame: "Nur an dem tröstenden Bewusstsein, dass sie schmachlich hintergangen sind, dass sie sich selbst nichts vorzuwerfen hätten, richten sie sich wieder auf."¹⁷

Although Ridderhoff's comparisons of the educational ideas of both authors is limited, he does draw a parallel between them. Sternheim's education in "hohe Bildung"¹⁸ combined with a "vollständigen Kenntniss des Haushaltes, ja der Führung der 'Tag-und-Rechnungsbücher,' sowie aller weiblichen Handarbeiten"¹⁹ is not treated as original. Ridderhoff traces it back to Richardson's heroines and comments "im Prinzip stimmt alles überein . . . ebenso wie

¹⁶Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 17.

¹⁷Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 17.

¹⁸Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 19.

¹⁹Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 19.

mit Pamela, Henriette Byron und auch Charlotte Grandison."²⁰

Both Richardson's and LaRoche's view of love is seen in a rationalistic context. Ridderhoff states: "Sie ist bei ihnen nicht die leidenschaftlich sich äussernde Liebe Rousseaus, nein die Vernunft führt in ihr die Herrschaft, nur mit ihrer Zustimmung darf der Liebende um Gegenliebe werben."²¹ He portrays their outlook of love as based on virtue, wisdom and honesty. Sternheim's love is depicted as unemotional and devoid of "das warme, nach Liebe verlangende und Liebe spendende Herz."²²

LaRoche's metaphysical ideas are linked to the Richardsonian principles of "Ruhe, Harmonie, Gelassenheit".²³ Ridderhoff emphasizes her portrayal of a rationally ordered world in which man ultimately achieves a happy ending.

Rousseau's influence on LaRoche is also seen in her presentation of the natural and social world. In these two areas, Richardson becomes a secondary presence. Rousseau is given credit for Sternheim's idealization of country life and her preference of nature over art. After a brief look at the representation of nature in Richardson, Ridderhoff confirms, "Aber alles dieses kann sich mit den Schilderungen

²⁰Ridderhoff, Sophie, pp. 18-19.

²¹Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 10.

²²Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 20.

²³Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 10.

der 'Héloïse' nicht messen, von denen die Idylle von Clarens die LaRoche besonders begeistert hat. Nach ihr schildert sie das Leben der Eltern ihrer Heldin . . . Auf beiden Landsitzen ferner waltet die Natur, nicht die Kunst."²⁴

Ridderhoff devotes a whole chapter to the examination of LaRoche's social views. He presents her focus on charity as "noch fast ganz auf dem Boden Richardson's".²⁵ However he allows her a slightly progressive and original advance: "LaRoche geht weiter bis zur Gründung von Armen-und Gesinde-häusern."²⁶ This step is taken "Im Geiste Rousseaus".²⁷

Similarly, he traces LaRoche's views on the class system back to Richardson and extends them forward to Rousseau. He indicates that Rousseau is the motivating force behind her portrayal of a mixed marriage, i.e. a marriage between a member of the middle-class and an aristocrat. After discussing a scene in Rousseau's Héloïse, Ridderhoff states, "und hierdurch hat sich die LaRoche wohl bewegen lassen, jene ungleiche Heirat zwischen dem Oberst und der Baronesse, die bei Richardson in dem entsprechenden

²⁴Ridderhoff, Sophie, pp. 33-34.

²⁵Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 29.

²⁶Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 29.

²⁷Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 30.

Falle im 'Grandison' nicht ermöglicht wird, zu verwirklichen."²⁸

As for LaRoche's depiction of the relationship between the upper and lower classes, Ridderhoff believes it falls short of Rousseau's picture of harmony. He describes her imitation as "Eine wenn auch schwache Kopie."²⁹

It seems evident that Ridderhoff, in this 1895 work, emphasizes the rational qualities within LaRoche's novel. In addition, he stresses the foreign influences on her writing, thereby treating her work not as an exciting, original work but a weak imitation of Richardson and Rousseau. Twelve years later, he seems to have altered his opinion about Sternheim.

In Ridderhoff's introduction to the 1907 edition of Sternheim, his bias appears to have changed in LaRoche's favour. In this introduction, he highlights the novel's positive qualities. He enhances Sophie von LaRoche's status as author in the following statement: "Diesen Roman einer unverdienten Vergessenheit zu entreissen, ist der Zweck dieser Neuausgabe."³⁰ He compliments her work by calling it contemporary: "Und doch hat gerade die jetzige Generation so mannigfache Veranlassung, mit Dankbarkeit das Gedächtnis

²⁸Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 32.

²⁹Ridderhoff, Sophie, p. 32.

³⁰Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. VI.

an Sophie von LaRoche und ihre schriftstellerisches Wirken in und ausser sich zu erneuen."³¹ In addition, he presents LaRoche as a fascinating and universal writer. The novel's plot is praised both for its artistic representation and for its timeless content. Ridderhoff refers to it as "die knappe, sehr geschickte Erzählung der Handlung, die noch heute das gespannte Interesse des Lesers erweckt und festhält."³²

In his introduction, Ridderhoff focuses more on the national origin of LaRoche's novel than on those foreign influences he stresses in 1895. He credits her with a heightened sense of nationalism and, furthermore, treats her work as superior to Richardson's. In his opinion, LaRoche achieves "durch warme vaterlandische Gesinnung durchaus den Charakter eines deutschen Werkes zu bewahren und wie wir uns nähere Betrachtung lehren wird, ihr Vorbild Richardson mit ihm zu übertreffen."³³

This new position which Ridderhoff adopts, reflects the concern of that time period with a renewed sense of nationalism. The literary criticism follows this trend of stressing national heritage. Less emphasis is now placed on foreign influence. Consequently, Ridderhoff shies away from

³¹Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. V.

³²Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. VI.

³³Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. VI.

the "Parallenjagd" which characterizes his earlier work.

Moving his focus from English and French influences to the novel's national origin, Ridderhoff devotes eleven pages to the examination of Wieland's influence on LaRoche. Not only his psychological support but his technical guidance is carefully explained. He also gives a thorough report of the exuberant praise lavished on the author by her German contemporaries, dwelling on the superlative compliments of Herder, Flachsland, Lenz, Goethe and Julie Bondeli.

It is clear from the writers listed above, that Ridderhoff's approach to Sternheim has changed. Besides stressing the novel's original and national elements, Ridderhoff shifts from a preoccupation with the rational to a greater acknowledgement of more 'empfindsam' elements. Here he highlights the novel's reception by members of the new irrationalism. He shows strong support for the compliments they give to LaRoche by criticizing Wieland's comments and footnotes in the novel. He declares, "Selten ist wohl ein Werk mit so wenig Takt und Geschick der Öffentlichkeit übergeben, als es durch diese Beigaben Wielands mit der 'Sternheim' geschehen ist."³⁴

Unlike his earlier work, this introduction no longer treats Sternheim as a traditional "Aufklärung" novel. If, in his view, the novel is not typically representative of

³⁴Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XXII.

the "Aufklärung", then Wieland, an "Aufklärung" writer, could never have been its author. The following comment expresses this logical reasoning: "Es war schlechterdings unbegreiflich, wie man Wieland ein so ganz von seiner Art verschiedenes Werk zuschreiben konnte."³⁵

Richardson's influence is played down in this introduction. Ridderhoff does include a brief section entitled "Die 'Sternheim' und Richardson" but here it is the superiority of LaRoche that is stressed. He treats the form of her novel, her art of characterization and her presentation of nature as superseding Richardson.

In reference to the novel's form, Ridderhoff calls attention to "einen Nachteil in der Brieftechnik Richardson".³⁶ Now the originality of LaRoche lies in the foreground. He continues, "Ein weiterer Vorzug der 'Sternheim' ist, dass sie viel natürlicher als die Richardsonschen Romane eine . . . Erzählung darstellt."³⁷ Her portrayal of Sternheim's love of nature is "ein weiterer grosser Vorzug"³⁸ and he regards its presentation as so heightened, "wie es bei Richardson nirgends auch nur in

³⁵Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XXI.

³⁶Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XXXIV.

³⁷Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XXXV.

Andeutungen vorhanden ist."³⁹ And finally, he sees her original talent at work in her characterization. Here too, he finds her surpassing Richardson: "Aber wie in der Form ihres Werkes, so hat sich die LaRoche, ihrer Eigenart folgend, auch in der Darstellung ihrer Personen von ihrem Vorbild frei zu machen gewusst und ist damit über dies hinausgewachsen."⁴⁰

Ridderhoff hails LaRoche as a progressive force due to the new role she creates for women. In his book of 1895, he treats her educational ideas as conventional and based on Richardson's heroines. Now he states, "dass man im Mädchen nicht nur eine tüchtige Hausfrau, sondern auch einen geistigen Kameraden des Mannes heranziehen müsse."⁴¹ This goal of the contemporary woman is, according to Ridderhoff, the goal of LaRoche's novel. He then mentions her name alongside those of Pfeffel, Brechter, Rousseau and Basedow, thereby linking her to a more progressive element.

³⁹Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XXXVI.

⁴⁰Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. XXXV.

⁴¹Ridderhoff, "Einleitung", p. V.

2.3 Wilhelm Spickernagel (1911)

In 1911, Wilhelm Spickernagel presents a dissertation entitled Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim von Sophie von LaRoche und Goethes Werther. Here is another example of the "Parallelenjagd" demonstrated by Ridderhoff, however with a distinctive difference. While Ridderhoff initially compares LaRoche's work with foreign authors, Spickernagel remains within the German realm. This shift of comparison indicates not only the national focus in criticism of this period, but also a greater recognition of Sternheim's irrational elements. Goethe here replaces Ridderhoff's Richardson.

Spickernagel is conscious of the novel's contradictory qualities. He places Sternheim somewhere between the "Aufklärung" and the "Gefühlsphilosophie", two movements which he treats as polarities: "Werther bedeutet die Überwindung der Aufklärung durch die Gefühlsphilosophie. Auch die Sternheim ist unter dem Kampfe dieser beiden geistigen Bewegungen entstanden. Wenn sich die LaRoche auch noch nicht völlig von allen Anschauungen der Aufklärung freimacht, so kündigt sich doch der neue Geist in ihrem Werke an."¹ More specifically, he feels that the "Gefühlsphilosophie" plays a larger role in her novel than the

¹ Wilhelm Spickernagel, Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim von Sophie von LaRoche und Goethes Werther, Diss. Greifswald 1911, p. 24, hereafter cited as Spickernagel.

"Aufklärung" and therein lies the main thrust of his argument. In this respect, he differs greatly from Ridderhoff, who emphasizes the rationalistic elements.

According to Spickernagel, LaRoche's novel has a psychological rather than an objective didactic basis: "Das Problem ihres Romanes ist, wie im 'Werther', ein psychologisches."² His dissertation subsequently focuses on its emotional or "empfindsam" elements. In comparing LaRoche's Sternheim to Goethe's Werther, he highlights the more irrational elements and plays down the rational. He perceives the latter negatively and finds their presence partly responsible for Sternheim's secondary status with respect to Werther.

Spickernagel stresses the "empfindsam" quality of LaRoche's characterization and highlights this aspect in the main characters. Of Seymour's portrayal he states, "In der Schilderung von Seymour's Persönlichkeit hebt sie das Feuer seiner schönen Augen hervor. Sie vergleicht ihn mit einem schönen aber stark rauschenden Bach, der im Grunde eine Menge reiner Goldkörner führe."³ He sees Derby as passionate: "Lord Derby ist ein durchaus leidenschaftlicher, sinnlicher Charakter".⁴ He dwells on the subjective

²Spickernagel, p. 34.

³Spickernagel, p. 53.

⁴Spickernagel, p. 53.

basis of Sternheim's letters: "Ihre Briefe sind durchweg Äußerungen ihres inneren Erlebens,".⁵ The didactic element of the heroine's character is labelled as an inferior trait in comparison to "Lottes gesunde Frohnatur"⁶ in Werther. He refers to it as "die ängstlichen moralischen Bedenken des Fräuleins von Sternheim".⁷

An in-depth analysis of the role of nature in both Goethe and LaRoche is given in this dissertation. Spickernagel emphasizes its high profile. He believes both authors stress "Das Gefühl des innigsten Einsseins mit der Natur".⁸ Nature here has a subjective role bordering on the irrational: "In tiefster Seelennot erscheint die Natur als zerstörende Macht."⁹

Although highlighting this deeply emotional side of nature in both Werther and Sternheim, Spickernagel acknowledges the presence of a contrasting quality in the latter. To LaRoche's heroine, he attributes an "äußerlichen Zweckbetrachtung des Naturgeschehens".¹⁰ He relates this rational function to the "aufklärerische Standpunkt der

⁵Spickernagel, p. 35.

⁶Spickernagel, p. 65.

⁷Spickernagel, p. 65.

⁸Spickernagel, p. 49.

⁹Spickernagel, p. 60.

¹⁰Spickernagel, p. 78.

LaRoche".¹¹ While Goethe's purely aesthetic presentation of nature is lauded, LaRoche's rational concern is seen negatively: "Hier und da drängt sich in ihre Naturbetrachtung der philiströse Standpunkt des Nützlichen und beeinträchtigt die Schönheit ihrer Bilder".¹² Spickernagel's use of "Hier und da" places the rational element in a minor, secondary position to the prevailing emotional tone.

In discussing the theme of education in both works, Spickernagel again focuses on the subjective qualities. He argues that both novels portray the woman's role as a spiritual companion and not as an educated intellectual: "Das Fräulein von Sternheim ebenso Lotte haben nichts von dem emanzipierten Wesen moderner Frauenrechtlerinnen an sich. Sie sind gute deutsche Hausmütter und schmeicheln sich durch ihren echt weiblichen Liebreiz in das Herz des Lesers ein."¹³ He places more emphasis on LaRoche's desire to educate the inner being than on her objective fact-orientation towards education, and traces her ideal of the well-rounded individual through Wieland to Shaftesbury. He has Goethe share this ideal with LaRoche: "Das Fräulein von Sternheim, Lord Seymour, Werther, Lotte besitzen diese harmonische Bildung im Sinne Shaftesburys, in welcher

¹¹Spickernagel, p. 78.

¹²Spickernagel, p. 62.

¹³Spickernagel, pp. 73-74.

allerdings das ästhetische Element überwiegt."¹⁴ However, he makes a distinction between Goethe's ideal of a natural education and LaRoche's moderate reliance on a more traditional approach: "Doch schreibt die LaRoche der Erziehung und Belehrung eine größere Macht zu als der junge Goethe, der die unverdorbene Ganzheit des Kindes höher einschätzt als die verfeinerte Bildung des Kulturmenschen."¹⁵

Spickernagel differentiates between the German and the French outlook on passionate love. Although focusing on its portrayal in the "empfindsamen Zeit in Deutschland"¹⁶, he places the English concept of love closer to the German idea than the French: "Überhaupt stehen die Engländer mit ihrem höheren sittlichen Ernst der deutschen Auffassung viel näher als Rousseau."¹⁷

Unlike Ridderhoff, Spickernagel does not see a purely rational presentation of love in Sternheim but a heightened emotional one which, he believes, surpasses the materialistic renderings of Hermes and Gellert, and points ahead to Goethe. He grants LaRoche "einen Aufschwung in der Liebesempfindung, der auf 'Werther' hinweist,"¹⁸ While

¹⁴Spickernagel, p. 75.

¹⁵Spickernagel, p. 78.

¹⁶Spickernagel, p. 53.

¹⁷Spickernagel, p. 53,

¹⁸Spickernagel, p. 57.

strongly underlining the resemblance between the "Gefühls-
ergüssen"¹⁹ in Seymour and Werther, Spickernagel does
mention a difference between Werther and Sternheim: "Der
Liebe in der Sternheim fehlt noch jedes sinnlichleiden-
schaftliche Element."²⁰ He refers to the moderate conven-
tional tone of the latter in characteristically negative
fashion: "Allzuängstlich sucht die LaRoche sinnliche
Äußerungen zu unterdrücken."²¹

Spickernagel is aware of the juxtaposition of diverse
elements in LaRoche's portrayal of the metaphysical world.
They combine "aufklärerische Gedanken mit solchen des
Pietismus".²² In his view, her religious views comprise an
odd mixture of contradictions that are "unbedenklich
vereinigt"²³ and which are characteristic of an author whom
he labels as an "echte Eklektikerin".²⁴ He contrasts
LaRoche's ambiguous presentation with Goethe's "individua-
listischen Geistesart"²⁵ and credits Goethe as surpassing
LaRoche by his clear-cut break with the rational world:

¹⁹Spickernagel, p. 58.

²⁰Spickernagel, p. 58.

²¹Spickernagel, p. 58.

²²Spickernagel, p. 78.

²³Spickernagel, p. 78.

²⁴Spickernagel, p. 78.

²⁵Spickernagel, p. 78.

"widerstrebt es . . . Goethe, sein religiöses Fühlen und Denken in ein System von Regeln zu zwingen."²⁶

Spickernagel discusses both LaRoche's depiction of religious feelings and rational religious ideas but stresses the former. He links her to pietism through her emphasis on the "Verinnerlichung"²⁷ of the religious experience. He ties her to the "Aufklärung" by virtue of the external moral code she imposes on her characters and cites Richardson's influence in this area. Goethe on the other hand "ist von der Relativität aller ethischen Begriffe überzeugt."²⁸

A lengthy examination of Sternheim's vocabulary is presented here. Spickernagel is preoccupied with the emotional tone of LaRoche's language and he attributes its quality to the influence of Rousseau. In his view, her use of language far surpasses the limited rational scope of earlier writers: "Der frische empfindungsvolle Ton ihrer Sprache sticht günstig gegen den akademisch trockenen Stil ihrer Vorgänger ab."²⁹ This "Sprache der Leidenschaft und der ausgeprägten Empfindsamkeit"³⁰ receives top priority in

²⁶Spickernagel, p. 78.

²⁷Spickernagel, p. 78.

²⁸Spickernagel, p. 79.

²⁹Spickernagel, p. 39.

³⁰Spickernagel, p. 44.

Spickernagel's examination of the language in Werther and Sternheim. He dwells especially on the words "Natur", "Seele" and "Ausdrücke der Gemütsbewegung".³¹

He sets this positive "empfindsam" quality above Wieland's rational requirement: "Sie setzt sich über den rationalistischen Regelzwang hinweg und erregt dadurch bei Wieland Anstoß."³² Like Ridderhoff in his 1907 introduction and like the young members of the new irrationalism, Spickernagel finds Wieland's criticisms of the novel ridiculous. He parallels them to "die Nörgeleien jenes pedantischen Ministers über Werthers poetische Lizenzen."³³

In examination of LaRoche's treatment of social issues, Spickernagel is primarily concerned with national influences. Consequently, he traces her presentation of idyllic country life not to Richardson or Rousseau but to Herder, whom he regards as the main German representative of this ideal. He compares both Werther's and Sternheim's preference of a natural lifestyle to the artificial existence at court. He shows both as sharing the humanitarian ideal, which Spickernagel discusses not in its rational expression of ideas but in its emotional context. He refers to it as "Ein starkes soziales Empfinden "³⁴ and comments on it

³¹Spickernagel, p. 44.

³²Spickernagel, p. 38.

³³Spickernagel, p. 38.

³⁴Spickernagel, p. 68.

as founding "Menschenverbrüderung".³⁵

The national content of LaRoche's novel had already been mentioned in Ridderhoff's 1907 introduction. Here Spickernagel gives it a higher profile. His title first demonstrates this trend away from a concentration on the foreign element. Goethe's Werther appeared three years' after LaRoche's Sternheim so it cannot be presented as a role model but rather as a basis of nationalistic comparison. Spickernagel mentions the influence of the following German writers on her work: Wieland, Winckelmann, Lavater, Herder, Jacobi, Brockes and Klopstock. He admits some foreign traces in the novel but ascribes limits to their importance. He attributes a strong national conscience to both LaRoche and Goethe: "Sophie von LaRoche als auch der junge Goethe [betonen] ihr Deutschtum stark... Frau von LaRoche spricht sich in der 'Sternheim' ausdrücklich gegen die Nachäffung französischen Wesens aus und verlangt, daß die deutsche Belesenheit immer der französischen vorzuziehen sei."³⁶

Spickernagel reflects the national conscience of the criticism of his time by accentuating the novel's German components. For example, he includes a small section entitled "eine Reihe von französischen Fremdwörtern"³⁷ in discussion of LaRoche's use of language. However he

³⁵Spickernagel, p. 69.

³⁶Spickernagel, p. 47.

³⁷Spickernagel, p. 47.

minimizes the impact of these French terms by stating, "Sie haben einen volkstümlichen Ton gewonnen, sodaß sie nicht als Fremdkörper empfunden werden."³⁸

In discussing the portrayal of nature in her novel, Spickernagel again makes a reference to a foreign element but then immediately softens its influence. He mentions the figure of Rousseau: "Rousseau hat mit seinem farbenprächtigen Naturschilderungen, mit seiner glühenden Naturliebe auf die 'Sternheim' und namentlich auf den 'Werther' mächtigen Einfluß ausgeübt."³⁹ Yet simultaneously, he highlights a characteristic difference between the French and the German concept of nature, adding "daß das Naturgefühl auf deutschen Boden seine eigene Entwicklung durchgemacht hat."⁴⁰

Even in his treatment of the romantic and social feelings in these novels, Spickernagel gives added weight to the national element. He attributes the naive behaviour of Werther and Seymour to their German heritage: "Es offenbart sich in diesen Gefühlsergüssen die tiefe Einfalt und Unschuld des reinen deutschen Gemütes."⁴¹

In the same manner, he maximizes the individual German

³⁸Spickernagel, p. 47.

³⁹Spickernagel, p. 59.

⁴⁰Spickernagel, p. 59.

⁴¹Spickernagel, p. 58.

quality of the "Zug der Menschenverbrüderung"⁴² which both Sternheim and Werther exhibit at the expense of its French origin. He states, "Rousseaus Romane haben ohne Zweifel dazu beigetragen, diese Tendenz bei den deutschen Schriftstellern zu verstärken, aber die Volksfreundlichkeit unserer Romane beruht doch auf sozialpolitischen Anschauungen, in denen sich der deutsche Geist mit seiner Eigenart ausprägt."⁴³ Furthermore, the rousseauistic concept of "égalité" is not treated with the same respect as its German counterpart. Spickernagel writes, "In der 'Sternheim' wie im 'Werther' lebt die gesunde Abneigung der historisch orientierten Deutschen gegen jede öde Gleichmacherei."⁴⁴ Notice the derogatory reference to the French in "öde Gleichmacherei" as opposed to the "gesund" quality of the German concept.

Spickernagel gives LaRoche enormous credit as the creative force behind the original form of Sternheim. The successful form of her first novel is, in his view, the product of her own talent: "Eine solche Form konnte die LaRoche bei ihren Vorbildern Richardson und Rousseau nicht finden. Sie gestaltet daher ihre Briefform für ihre künstlerischen Zwecke mit Originalität um".⁴⁵

⁴² Spickernagel, p. 69.

⁴³ Spickernagel, p. 69.

⁴⁴ Spickernagel, p. 69.

⁴⁵ Spickernagel, p. 35.

Similarly, he finds her art of characterization as surpassing the stereotyped attempts of writers before her: "Gegenüber ihren Vorgängern zeigt die LaRoche einen bedeutenden Fortschritt in der Technik der Menschenschilderung. Ihre Gestalten haben Leben und Blut."⁴⁶

He presents her outlook on the marriage relationship as no longer based on the "krassesten Materialismus"⁴⁷ where the wife's role is confined to mother, cook, seamstress and nurse. Instead a progressive picture emerges here as he asserts that "In der 'Sternheim' lebt bereits eine höhere Auffassung von Liebe und Ehe als bei ihren Vorgängern, z.B. bei Hermes und Gellert."⁴⁸

LaRoche's social ideals are treated here as original, therefore progressive. Unlike Ridderhoff, who parallels them to a superior version in Richardson and Rousseau, Spickernagel does not regard her depiction of the status quo as a stagnant or even inferior version of previous works. He thinks quite the contrary: "Die LaRoche tritt gegen falsche Standesvorurteile für die Liebeshe ein. Bei Gellert und auch bei Rousseau wirken die Standesunterschiede noch als trennendes Ehehindernis. In der 'Sternheim' und im 'Werther' sind die Menschen über die Standesvorurteile

⁴⁶ Spickernagel, p. 54.

⁴⁷ Spickernagel, p. 57.

⁴⁸ Spickernagel, p. 57.

der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft hinausgewachsen."⁴⁹

Finally, in the realm of women's education, Spickernagel projects the author alongside the progressive statures of Locke, Rousseau and Basedow. He proclaims, "Sophie von LaRoche ist die mutige Vorkämpferin einer vernünftigen Frauenbildung".⁵⁰ He presents her as progressive not in the field of pedantic education but in her suggestion of the cultivation of the mind and spirit: "Die Frau soll die geistige Gefährtin des Mannes sein."⁵¹

⁴⁹Spickernagel, p. 57.

⁵⁰Spickernagel, p. 72.

⁵¹Spickernagel, p. 72.

2.4 Christine Touaillon (1919)

Christine Touaillon examines LaRoche's Sternheim in her book Der Deutsche Frauenroman des 18. Jahrhunderts. Unlike Ridderhoff and Spickernagel, she not only perceives the novel's diverse elements but places them as the focus of her discussion. She does not regard the novel as primarily rational as does Ridderhoff. Neither does she regard it as primarily irrational as does Spickernagel. Touaillon believes LaRoche's writing incorporates both directions: "Sie ist ein viel zu unklarer Geist, um alle Folgerungen einer Meinung zu ziehen. Daher laufen in ihr die rationalistische und die empfindsame Strömung zeitlebens nebeneinander her."¹ The two contrasting directions are also products of the author's divergent motives: "So entsteht der erste deutsche Frauenroman aus zwei entgegengesetzten Antrieben. Er verdankt sein Dasein dem Wunsch seiner Schöpferin, die Wirklichkeit zu vergessen, tritt aber anderseits wieder in so enge Beziehung zur Wirklichkeit, daß er aus dem Leben gezogene Erziehungsgrundsätze in künstlerische Formen umgießt."² Each of these contradictory directions is detected in a different area: "das Äußere vom Rationalismus, das Innere von der Empfindsamkeit;".³

¹Christine Touaillon, Der deutsche Frauenroman des 18. Jahrhunderts, (Wien: Braumüller, 1919), p. 73, hereafter cited as Touaillon.

²Touaillon, p. 100.

³Touaillon, p. 73.

Touaillon's particular role in the field of Sternheim criticism is further marked by her original classification of the novel as "den ersten empfindsamen deutschen Roman".⁴ She feels her application of the term "empfindsam" to the novel as justified by LaRoche's intensive involvement of "das Seelische" : "Aber erst in dem Erstlingswerk der LaRoche treten die empfindsamen Züge in einem so hohen Maße hervor, bildet das Seelische so unverkennbar den Kern der Handlung, daß man von einem empfindsamen Roman im Gegensatz zu den rationalistischen Familienroman sprechen kann".⁵

This term "empfindsam" becomes the key word in Touaillon's discussion. Although she recognizes and discusses the novel's rational elements, she is more concerned with LaRoche's effective manipulation of the former. She feels that the "empfindsam" elements are more noticeable: "Die empfindsamen Züge sind überall viel eindrucksvoller dargestellt . . . Darum wirkt der Roman trotz seiner Beziehungen zum Rationalismus durchaus empfindsam."⁶ This discussion will begin with a look at those elements which Touaillon regards as rationalistic. She sees them as being inconspicuously interspersed in the novel.

⁴Touaillon, p. 72.

⁵Touaillon, p. 115.

⁶Touaillon, p. 119

Touaillon allots a small section to her discussion of the influence of rationalism in Sternheim. Linking the "Aufklärung" to rationalism, she briefly examines its presence in LaRoche's treatment of education, social issues and metaphysics.

She views the novel's approach to education as "übertriebene Wertschätzung des Wissens"⁷ and refers to its inherent "Überwiegen der pädagogischen Tendenzen".⁸ Like Spickernagel, she refers negatively to this rationalistic quality of education. She presents LaRoche's social ideas as conservative: "Auch die konservative Lösung aller Staats- und Gesellschaftsprobleme, welche bei ihr nach aller ursprünglichen Auflehnung noch immer das Ende bildet, teilt sie mit dem Rationalismus."⁹ Similarly, she attributes LaRoche's dogmatic approach to religion to the "Einfluß des Rationalismus"¹⁰, i.e. to the "Aufklärung". The following statement verifies this: "In echt aufklärerischer Weise hat sie sich von der Stichhaltigkeit der religiösen Gründe und der moralischen Nutzbarkeit der Religion überzeugt".¹¹

The emotional constituents of LaRoche's novel, "Die empfindsamen Züge", are given a lot of attention by Touaillon.

⁷Touaillon, p. 115.

⁸Touaillon, p. 115.

⁹Touaillon, p. 118.

¹⁰Touaillon, p. 118.

¹¹Touaillon, p. 118.

It is interesting to note the authors whom she credits with influencing LaRoche in this area. Both Richardson and Rousseau are given a role here, with the former being honoured as "der Erste auf dem Gebiete des empfindsamen Romans".¹² She believes LaRoche surpasses Richardson in this area and that in turn, Goethe surpasses her. The parallel to Spickernagel's argument is evident here: "Die Stimmung welche Rousseau zum erstenmal künstlerisch gestaltet hatte und welche den Deutschen später im Werther am hinreißendsten entgentreten sollte, lag der Frau um die Mitte des 18. Jahrhunderts besonders nahe . . . ehe der Werther erschienen war, hatte das 'Fräulein von Sternheim' auf ihn vorbereitet;".¹³ These emotional qualities of Sternheim which point ahead to Werther take up the largest portion of Touaillon's discussion.

In examination of LaRoche's characterization, Touaillon points out its "empfindsam" basis. She says of her characters, "Sie unterscheiden sich stark von der rationalistischen Überlieferung. Ihre Gefühle spielen eine ungleich größere Rolle als ihre 'Meinungen'".¹⁴ In Seymour's character, she discovers a deeper subjective source beneath his rationalistic exterior: "Neben der

¹²Touaillon, p. 113.

¹³Touaillon, p. 207.

¹⁴Touaillon, p. 107.

rationalistischen Vereinigung von Edelmut und Menschenliebe mit einem aufgeklärten Geist weist sein Wesen auch einen starken Einschlag von Empfindsamkeit auf."¹⁵ His character is propelled into the irrational sphere on the basis of his strong "Empfindsamkeit": "Er besitzt Wertherzüge vor Werther."¹⁶

Touaillon further highlights the "empfindsam" nature of the heroine in tracing both Sternheim's internal and external character portrait. Of her appearance, Touaillon says, "Sie besitzt bereits ein empfindsames Äußeres. Sie ist nicht mehr vollkommen schön, doch hat sie ein 'Gesicht voll Seele' ".¹⁷ Her internal suffering is given an irrational nature and this in turn is classified under "empfindsame Züge".¹⁸ Touaillon presents this suffering as the product of a pessimistic outlook on life: "Im Gegensatze zu dem Behagen, das der Rationalist der Welt gegenüber empfindet, blickt aus alle Reden und Handlungen dieser Menschen das Gefühl der Unzulänglichkeit des Lebens hervor."¹⁹ She labels this latter irrational quality as "empfindsamen Lebensschmerz".²⁰

¹⁵Touaillon, p. 107.

¹⁶Touaillon, p. 107.

¹⁷Touaillon, p. 108.

¹⁸Touaillon, p. 110.

¹⁹Touaillon, p. 110.

²⁰Touaillon, p. 118.

The emotional fibre of LaRoche's portrayal of love is also extended to the irrational. Touaillon recognizes "Liebe auf den ersten Blick"²¹ in the novel and treats it as an "empfindsam" quality. In discussing the "Empfindsamkeit" in Seymour's character, she compares it to Werther. The irrational force of his love is accentuated: "sein Liebeskummer ist zu seiner einzigen Seligkeit geworden."²²

Touaillon's focus on the pietistic sphere in Sternheim is related to her preoccupation with "Empfindsamkeit".

She asserts: "die ganze Luft, welche den Roman durchweht, ist pietistische Luft."²³ and cites LaRoche's contact with the works of Arndt, Brockes and Francke. The heroine's "Verzweiflung", which is treated as a rational necessity in Ridderhoff's discussion, is here linked to the function of a pietistic theme. Touaillon places it in the "Versuchung, Erniedrigung und Erhöhung"²⁴ developmental program of the believer.

LaRoche's heavy reliance on emotional language is also traced to the influence of pietism: "Auch die Sprache zeigt pietistische Anklänge. Sie spricht von der 'Wiederherstellung der Seele' . . . und ihr Pathos des Schmerzes

²¹Touaillon, p. 108.

²²Touaillon, p. 108.

²³Touaillon, p. 104.

²⁴Touaillon, p. 104.

spricht sich jederzeit in pietistischen Wendungen aus."²⁵ Touaillon contrasts it to the rational language of philosophy and logic: "überall macht es sich bemerkbar, daß sie nicht die Sprache des Verstandes, sondern die Sprache des Gefühls ist."²⁶

Touaillon appears to form a link between the quality of "Empfindsamkeit" and the feminine personality. She is the first critic to indicate the effects of LaRoche's sex on her novel. This focus on the female is initially illustrated in the title of her book and then in her classification of LaRoche's novel as both "empfindsam" and written by a female. The effects of this feminine presence on the novel is further reflected in the various comments which are interspersed in Touaillon's discussion.

The more realistic aspect of Derby's character is attributed to the author's sex. Although Touaillon regards Derby primarily as a Richardsonian stereotype, she sees an original, heightened presence and says "daß er am lebhaftesten wirke und daß seine Briefe stärkeren Eindruck als alle übrigen erregten."²⁷ She feels this latter quality is due to the following: "Trotzdem konnte sie sich im Laufe ihrer Darstellung eines gewissen weiblichen Wohlgefallens

²⁵Touaillon, p. 105.

²⁶Touaillon, p. 114.

²⁷Touaillon, p. 110.

an dem Verführer nicht ent schlagen ".²⁸

She also regards Sternheim's portrayal as more successful due to the feminine hand behind the scenes. The heroine's natural character presentation is related to the sex of the author: "Sie hat trotz ihrer Tugend und Größe auch manche lebendige Züge; daneben manche, welche schon auf starke Verfeinerung des weiblichen Empfindens hinweisen ".²⁹

Touaillon notes a feminine presence in the novel's intellectual sphere. She views emotions as feminine and ideas as masculine, thereby logically assuming that LaRoche's preoccupation with the former is related to her sex. This idea is reflected in the following comment in which she differentiates between the focus of male and female writers: "Der weibliche Geist huschte an den Problemen vorbei, welche den männlichen Geist bedrängten ".³⁰ Consequently, it is, in this view, only natural for LaRoche to put less emphasis on ideas. Touaillon also links this fact to the restrictions placed on women's education in the 18th century. Since greater intellectual resources remained the prerogative of the male writer, the woman found it easier and more natural to write about emotions.

Finally, Touaillon traces the feminine element in

²⁸Touaillon, p. 109.

²⁹Touaillon, p. 109.

³⁰Touaillon, p. 112.

LaRoche's presentation of social issues. Although she does not regard LaRoche's views as particularly progressive, she does recognize them as a distinct achievement.

Touaillon calls LaRoche's criticism of the upper classes as "eine Tat für eine Frau jener Zeit."³¹

Like Ridderhoff and Spickernagel before her, Touaillon accents LaRoche's originality. She presents LaRoche as an author who, although influenced by others, remains unique in her own right. Wieland's helping hand is acknowledged but he is not given a prominent role in molding LaRoche. Touaillon sees the expression of her creative talent as equal to the application of any formal guidance: "So untertänig Sophie um Rat bittet, so schnell sie bereit ist, sich in äußeren Dingen literarisch unterzuordnen und so gut sie um Wielands reicheres Können Bescheid weiß, so wenig läßt sie sich bei ihrem Erstlingswerke durch kritische Einwände von dem Weg abbringen, der ihrer künstlerischen Natur angemessen ist."³²

It is primarily in the heightened depiction of the novel's inner world that Touaillon recognizes LaRoche's talent. She believes the subjective elements of Sternheim "im deutschen Romane bisher noch niemals in solcher Eindringlichkeit verwendet worden waren".³³ She highly compliments LaRoche's

³¹Touaillon, p. 112.

³²Touaillon, p. 102.

³³Touaillon, p. 105.

treatment of the psychological realm: "Hier macht sie feine Beobachtungen und weiß sie geschickt darzustellen und folgerichtig auszustalten."³⁴ She lauds Wieland's show of support for LaRoche's original talent in language: "Mit Recht lobt er dagegen die Eigenart der Bilder und die Energie der Sprache."³⁵ In her view, LaRoche's character portrayal reaches a superior level because of its subjective emphasis. She compares her heroine to Richardson's Clarissa: "sie hat aber vor Clarissa, der sie stark ähnelt, doch manches Wichtige voraus . . . das Fräulein von Sternheim tritt menschlich näher als das starre Tugendbild Clarissa."³⁶

Touaillon comments favourably on LaRoche's treatment of plot and form. She finds the former as superior to Richardson because of its realism. Here again, it is the emotional aspect which she believes responsible for LaRoche's triumph: "lebhafter und anziehender ist die etwas veräußerlichte Handlung der LaRoche. Diese verstand es auch, einzelne Motive geschickter zu fassen und ihrem Roman eine wärmere persönliche Färbung, einen hinreißenderen Ausdruck des Gefühls zu verleihen."³⁷ In Touaillon's mind, Sternheim's form surpasses not only Richardson's model but

³⁴ Touaillon, p. 111.

³⁵ Touaillon, p. 114.

³⁶ Touaillon, pp. 110-111.

³⁷ Touaillon, p. 107.

even those of her German forerunners: "Auch in der Technik bedeutet der Erstlingswerk der LaRoche ihren deutschen Vorgängern gegenüber - Wieland und etwa Thümmel ausgenommen - einen großen Fortschritt."³⁸ She calls it "kunstvoll"³⁹ and refers to its "Durchsichtigkeit und Klarheit".⁴⁰

The trend in criticism of focusing more on the national presence had already been exhibited in Ridderhoff's "Einleitung" of 1907 and had intensified in Spickernagel's discussion. Traces of this trend are found in Touaillon as well.

Touaillon mentions LaRoche's part in "Englandschwärmerei"⁴¹ but simultaneously de-emphasizes its link to the foreign author, Richardson. She also gives credit for its appearance in her novel to the influence of German writers: "Diese fußt nicht bloß auf ihrer Verehrung für Richardson, sondern war ihr auch durch Gellert und seine Genossen nahegerückt."⁴²

Furthermore, Touaillon presents the novel's foreign elements as an achievement on the part of LaRoche herself. She treats her talented employment of these foreign qualities in light of their advantage to the German people: "Daß sie

³⁸Touaillon, p. 112.

³⁹Touaillon, p. 112.

⁴⁰Touaillon, p. 112.

⁴¹Touaillon, p. 111.

⁴²Touaillon, p. 111.

Rousseaus Wirkung in Deutschland verallgemeinerte und durch die Berührung mit St. Pierres Naturbeobachtung das Naturgefühl auch der mittleren Schichte des deutschen Publikums nahebrachte, bleibt ihr großes Verdienst."⁴³

In the following passage Touaillon illustrates LaRoche's singular achievement in her contribution to the development of the German novel and also pays tribute to the "empfindsam" and original qualities of her writing within a national framework: "Außerdem trug sie aber auch dazu bei, die Seele des deutschen Romans zu erwecken . . . Und noch mehr: sie trug dazu bei, den deutschen Roman, so lange die Stätte wüster Erotik, mit sittlichen Idealen zu erfüllen, zum Sammelpunkt alles seelischen Strebens zu machen und dadurch, wie Scherer sagt, die deutsche Nation auf die Iphigenie vorzubereiten."⁴⁴

⁴³Touaillon, p. 206.

⁴⁴Touaillon, p. 206.

2.5 Fritz Brüggemann (1938)

Fritz Brüggemann's introduction to the 1938 edition of LaRoche's Sternheim provides an interesting position with respect to other criticism of the novel. His "Einführung" represents its last treatment until the early 1960's and, in many ways, a turning point in the way this novel is perceived.

Brüggemann classifies Sternheim as "der erste bedeutende deutsche Roman".¹ This is not the same category into which Touaillon places the novel for one word is noticeably absent, the word "empfindsam". While Touaillon spends the major part of her energy proving the novel's close relationship to sentimentalism, Brüggemann does an about turn. He refers to it as a "nichtempfindsamen Roman" and then proceeds to give his reasons for assigning the term "Aufklärung" to both the novel and its author. He believes the novel is "eine Schöpfung aufklärerischen Geistes,"³ and by placing it under the heading "Reihe Aufklärung", underscores his position.

Before examining the novel's "Aufklärung" qualities,

¹Fritz Brüggemann, "Einleitung zum Nachdruck von Sophie von LaRoche, Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim," in: Deutsche Literatur. Sammlung literarischer Kunst- und Kulturdenkmäler in Entwicklungsreihen, Bd. 14 (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam Jun., 1938), p. 7, hereafter cited as "Brüggemann".

²Brüggemann, p. 13.

³Brüggemann, p. 5.

Brüggemann offers a definition of the term in its historical context. It is evident that he, unlike Touaillon, regards "Aufklärung" and "Rationalismus" as two somewhat different concepts: "Wohl hatte die neue Gefühlskultur seit den fünfziger Jahren die Aufklärung in ein neues Stadium versetzt, in dem der strenge Rationalismus einer gefühlsmäßigen Auffassung der Ansichten der Aufklärungszeit hatte weichen müssen; in ihrer grundsätzlichen Haltung waren diese indes unerschüttert stehengeblieben."⁴

It appears that the aim of Brüggemann's "Einführung" is to justify the novel's admission into the "Reihe Aufklärung". Consequently he focuses on its more rational traits and its "Aufklärung" ideas. The subjective element is analyzed in its subdued form, not as an antithesis to, but as an integral part of his conception of the "Aufklärung".

Brüggemann uses the author's motive as initial proof of the novel's true nature: "Ganz im Sinne der Aufklärung will die Verfasserin mit diesem ersten deutschen Frauenroman vor allem eine erzieherische Wirkung ausüben."⁵ He then illustrates LaRoche's success in achieving her goal. The ideas she presents are referred to as those of the "herrschenden Aufklärung".⁶

He emphasizes the utilitarian role of nature in the

⁴Brüggemann, p. 5.

⁵Brüggemann, p. 5.

⁶Brüggemann, p. 6.

novel. LaRoche's view of nature has no similarity to Werther's aesthetic ideal. His following words reflect this idea: "Der Zweckmäßigkeitsgedanke macht sich im Roman gelegentlich auch in der Betrachtung des Naturgeschehens als eines durchaus nützlichen geltend".⁷ Brüggemann further underlines this function of nature in a reference to Brockes.

Brüggemann sees the novel's religious and educational ideals as based on reason. He highlights their emphasis on the general as opposed to the individual and also their stress on usefulness: "Der nutzbringende Erziehungsgedanke im Roman zielt nicht zuletzt eben auf die Pflege der Überzeugung von der zweckmäßigen Vollkommenheit der von Gott geschaffenen Welt und auf die Unterwerfung unter diese Einsicht im praktischen Verhalten, also auf den Verzicht einer Eigenwilligkeit".⁸

LaRoche's ideals of "Tugend" and "Gelassenheit" are traced back to Richardson. He relates the influence of this English author on her rationalistic motive: "Die Tugend war ihr also im Sinne der Aufklärung lehrbar."⁹

Brüggemann contrasts LaRoche's view of love to the "Lebensideal der Leidenschaft"¹⁰ of the Storm and Stress

⁷Brüggemann, p. 6.

⁸Brüggemann, p. 6.

⁹Brüggemann, p. 6.

¹⁰Brüggemann, p. 6.

period. He believes that it adheres to the Richardsonian "Lebensideal der Gelassenheit"¹¹ where reason and fate, not passion, dictate the future of the romantic relationship: "Man findet sich daher leicht mit der gegebenen Fügung ab und liebt, wen das Schicksal zu lieben gewährt."¹² He relates this idea of love to Richardson and Gellert but not to Goethe's Werther. He labels it as "typisch 'empfindsam'"¹³ and further as a "bezeichnender Wesenszug reiner Empfindsamkeit."¹⁴ It appears then, that Brüggemann incorporates "Empfindsamkeit" into the "Aufklärung".

To understand Brüggemann's focus on the "Aufklärung", it is necessary to understand his view of "Empfindsamkeit" and its specific relationship to the former. He attempts to clarify the latter term by examining its historical origin and subsequent literary application. In his mind, "Empfindsamkeit" is not antagonistic to the "Aufklärung" but to "Rationalismus". Consequently it does not incorporate Wertherian passions but moderate feelings. He attributes its loose application to a general misunderstanding of its true nature: "So wird das Wort 'empfindsam' auch noch heute allgemein unter Leuten, die nicht literarhistorisch beeinflußt sind, nicht als Bezeichnung des Gefühls

¹¹Brüggemann, p. 6.

¹²Brüggemann, p. 10.

¹³Brüggemann, p. 10.

¹⁴Brüggemann, p. 10.

schlechthin im Gegensatz zum Rationalismus, sondern als Bezeichnung eines kraftlosen Gefühls, als Bezeichnung einer gewissen weichlichen Sentimentalität empfunden."¹⁵

He illustrates its misuse in its general application to the works of Gellert, Richardson and Goethe. In his view, "empfindsam" applies to the two former writers because of their portrayal of controlled feeling. However, "Der 'Werther' ist letzten Endes eben kein empfindsamer Roman mehr!"¹⁶ He applies this reasoning to LaRoche's novel and finds that since the young writers of 1771 recognized a new subjective element in her work that "Die 'Sternheim' ist deshalb so wenig ein empfindsamer Roman wie der 'Werther'."¹⁷

Like LaRoche's young contemporaries, Brüggemann recognizes new and original elements in her first novel. The word "bedeutende" in his classification of the novel stresses what he perceives as its unique nature. However, unlike the members of the new irrationalism in Germany which hail Sternheim as a revolutionary work, Brüggemann links the original elements to the "Aufklärung". This explains his puzzlement at the overwhelming reception the novel received in the anti-"Aufklärung" camp. He asks, "Wie erklärt sich

¹⁵Brüggemann, p. 10.

¹⁶Brüggemann, p. 10.

¹⁷Brüggemann, p. 10.

nun das Rätsel, daß die Gegner der Aufklärung - denn zu ihnen gehörten Goethe, Herder, Lenz, Merck und die mit ihnen gingen- einen Roman mehr oder minder enthusiastisch aufgenommen haben, der nach seinem Ideengehalt als ein einwandfreies Werk der Aufklärung angesprochen werden mußte, während die Vertreter dieser herrschenden Geistesrichtung, wie Wieland auf jeden Fall, dem Werk gegenüber eine zum Teil wenigstens beinahe befremdete Unsicherheit an den Tag legten?"¹⁸ The answer he proposes to this phenomenon, i.e. "Diese seltsame Tatsache"¹⁹, is that the young writers bypassed the world of ideas and recognized only the world of feeling. He suggests "daß durch ihn weniger der Verstand als das Gefühl der jungen Generation getroffen worden ist."²⁰

Brüggeman discusses the novel's "besondere Gefühlsnote"²¹ in an "Aufklärung" context. He treats it as progressive but not to the extent perceived by LaRoche's contemporaries. In his view, the "Gefühlsnote" of Werther does not correspond to the subjective world in Sternheim.

He presents the novel's other original qualities as not so progressive. The new trait he highlights above all others is the heroine's "gesteigertes Selbstbewußtsein, wie

¹⁸Brüggemann, p. 8.

¹⁹Brüggemann, p. 8.

²⁰Brüggemann, p. 9.

²¹Brüggemann, p. 9.

man es bis dahin nicht gekannt hatte".²² He links it to her charitable activities. Instead of praising its progressive dimension in the extreme manner of Goethe, Herder, and Lenz, he fits it neatly within "Aufklärung" boundaries. He doesn't consider this quality as an antagonism to the "Aufklärung" principle of "Gelassenheit" but rather as an extension of its basic form: "Demgegenüber ist der neue Geist der Aktivität in dem zwischen 1766 und 1771 entstandenen Roman im Grunde genommen nur ein neuer Ausdruck jener Wendung von einer allgemeinen passiven Seelenhaltung".²³

²²Brüggemann, p. 15.

²³Brüggemann, p. 15.

2.6 Modern Critics (1964-1982)

The discussion of Sternheim criticism thus far reveals a definite development in the way the novel is perceived. The novel's contemporary reviews illustrate a one-sided type of criticism in which each group examines and emphasizes single aspects of the novel. The tendency of focusing mainly on one aspect of the novel, whether rational or "empfindsam" continues in Ridderhoff, Spickernagel and Touaillon. It is not until Brüggemann's "Einführung" in 1938 that a major turning point is reached.

With Brüggemann's discussion, the novel's treatment and classification undergoes a paradigmatic shift. Brüggemann is the first critic to incorporate the novel's elements into a unified whole. He combines the rational and "empfindsam" qualities which are contrasted by earlier critics, and includes them in the general realm of the "Aufklärung". The modern critics follow and develop this new position adopted by Brüggemann.

The group I have labelled as "modern critics", begins approximately 26 years after Brüggemann. Why the long gap? The historical connections which play such a major role in the criticisms prior to the Third Reich, as demonstrated by Ridderhoff, Spickernagel and Touaillon, no longer have any importance for critics of the 1940's and 1950's. Instead, they approach the novel form as a unique and indigenous work of art. This age finds LaRoche's Sternheim too widely influenced by other writers and

therefore not original. They do not regard it as a "Kunstwerk" and consequently see it as not worthy of discussion.

In any case, 26 years go by without any major reference to her novel. When it once again receives attention in the 1960's, the critics approach it totally differently.

The new interpretations of Sternheim approach the novel in a more negative light. The early complimentary attitude of the critics has now given way to a view of the novel as a trivial work of literature. It is no longer regarded as original or progressive but as banal and mediocre.

These critics do not stress those disparate elements in the novel which are so starkly illuminated by LaRoche's contemporaries. The shift in emphasis from the rational to the emotional now becomes a shift to the "Aufklärung", where all of Sternheim's qualities become incorporated into a unified outlook. Since the concepts of Rationalism, "Empfindsamkeit" and "Aufklärung" are no longer perceived as mutually exclusive, neither are the diverse elements in LaRoche's novel. Stress is now laid on the novel's conforming "Aufklärung" attributes.

The brief discussion of these modern critics is structured chronologically, beginning in 1964 with Martin Greiner and ending with the last available criticism on Sophie LaRoche, Peter Petschauer's article of 1982.

In his book of 1964,¹ Martin Greiner examines LaRoche's Sternheim in the chapter entitled "Die Entfaltung und Ausbreitung der Banalität im Bürgerlichen Roman des 18. Jahrhunderts". His application of the word "Banalität" to her novel echoes the elementary status he assigns it in the title of his book, Studien zum Trivialroman des 18. Jahrhunderts.

His entire examination of her novel is based on his thesis that its comparison to a feminine Werther by earlier critics is "ein literarisches Fehlurteil"² that leads to "der ästhetische Irrtum".³ In his mind, Sternheim's subjective tone is unlike Werther's. He sees it not as the revolutionary picture of passion which Goethe portrays but as a mediocre stereotype. Of the heroine's feelings, he claims "daß diese Menschenseele bei aller auffallenden Subjektivität des Tonfalls die Grenzen der Konvention an keiner Stelle überschritt oder durchbrach."⁴

He thinks the young contemporaries of LaRoche failed to recognize this qualitative difference between the subjective world in Goethe and LaRoche because of their enthusiastic appreciation of the heroine's inner revelations.

¹Martin Greiner, Die Entstehung der modernen Unterhaltungsliteratur, hrsg. v. T. Poser, (Hamburg:1964), hereafter cited as Greiner.

²Greiner, p. 38.

³Greiner, p. 38.

⁴Greiner, p. 35.

For him, Sternheim's emotional world is a world of "Aufklärung" moderation. It serves a rational aim: "Dieser Roman . . . handelt immer nur indirekt von Liebe und Leidenschaft, nämlich immer nur so weit, wie daran zu zeigen ist, daß man sich trotzdem gut benimmt."⁵

The above view is based on Paul Kluckhohn, who in his 1922 work, Die Auffassung der Liebe in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts und in der deutschen Romantik had briefly discussed the pale portrayal of love in Sternheim: "so sind ihre Anschauungen mit denen der Aufklärung im wesentlichen identisch."⁶

Greiner's discussion focuses on Sternheim's conventional qualities. He finds neither innovative nor progressive elements within LaRoche's work and asserts that "Die 'Sternheim' hat keinen einzigen neuen Ton, aber sie bringt die alten durcheinander."⁷ This opinion is shared by Kurt-Ingo Flessau, who writes of LaRoche's work, "daß kein grundlegend neues Werk entstanden ist".⁸ He also feels that the novel is initially overpraised.

⁵Greiner, p. 44.

⁶Paul Kluckhohn, Die Auffassung der Liebe in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts und in der deutschen Romantik, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 3. Aufl. 1966), p. 184.

⁷Greiner, p. 39.

⁸Kurt-Ingo Flessau, Der moralische Roman: Studien zur gesellschaftskritischen Trivialliteratur der Goethezeit, hrsg. v. R. Alewyn und H. Singer, (Köln: Bohlau Verlag, 1968), p. 55.

In analyzing LaRoche's presentation of social ideas, Greiner differs from Brüggemann. The heroine's heightened subjective consciousness which she actualizes in social activity is labelled by the latter as "Selbstbewußtsein". Brüggemann treats it as a new quality although still tied to the "Aufklärung". Greiner however, gives the same motivating force the derogatory label of "Eigenliebe". By stressing her personal advantage over her humanitarian concerns, Greiner reveals Sternheim's character as being stereotypical. Similarly, he presents LaRoche's depiction of the social classes not as advanced but as regressive and claims it is in keeping with "der alten Gottschedischen Gliederung"⁹ where "Rang und Stand"¹⁰ have "eine kompensierende Kraft".¹¹

He views LaRoche's educational ideals as banal concerns. According to his evaluation of the heroine, he finds her interest in education as motivated by "der weiblichen List".¹² Instead of identifying a progressive note in this theme, he accuses the novel of the opposite, i.e. of trivializing the serious nature of the 18th century's educational values. He claims that "Unter

⁹Greiner, p. 39.

¹⁰Greiner, p. 39.

¹¹Greiner, p. 39.

¹²Greiner, p. 42.

Sophies Händen wandelt sich der pädagogische Gehalt ihres Zeitalters in ein Spielwerk der Eigenliebe;".¹³

Greiner views the novel as conforming to the "Aufklärung" theme. He compares its focus to the conventional rational motif of the "Verwirklichung des Aufklärerideals der durch Glück belohnten Tugend".¹⁴

In his discussion, Greiner presents the novel's initial popularity as an unwarranted phenomenon. He does not believe it is justified by the novel's content and feels that not only the book, but the author was and is overrated. He underlines this feeling with Goethe's later evaluation of LaRoche: "Sie hebt das Gemeine herauf und zieht das Vorzügliche herunter."¹⁵ He then underscores this derogatory reference with a personal judgement ending on the same negative note: "Präziser läßt sich ihre literarhistorische und literarsoziologische Funktion nicht ausdrücken".¹⁶

Burghard Dedner, like Greiner and Flessau, includes LaRoche's Sternheim in the category of "Trivialliteratur". His 1969 work attempts to explain the heroine's social consciousness in terms of the elements of contrast and harmony. He views her charitable actions in the same

¹³Greiner, p. 42.

¹⁴Greiner, p. 41.

¹⁵Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe, (Berlin: J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1892), bd. 3, p. 230.

¹⁶Greiner, p. 45.

way as Greiner, treating their motivation not as philanthropic but personal.

LaRoche's novel is here considered as belonging to the "Aufklärung". However he depicts this concept as no longer limited to a narrow, rationalistic tendency but one which harmonizes "empfindsam" and rational elements into a unified whole. This idea is reflected in his view that, "mit der Dominanz rührender Elemente wie überhaupt mit der Empfindsamkeit, irrationelle, pessimistische Tendenzen in den Rationalismus der Aufklärung eindringen".¹⁷

In accordance with the above idea, Dedner views "Empfindsamkeit" and "Aufklärung" as related concepts. He demonstrates this by simultaneously labelling the heroine as a member of the "Aufklärung" and speaking of "Sophie Sternheim und ihre empfindsamen Zeitgenossen".¹⁸

Like the majority of critics mentioned in this section, Peter Hohendahl, in his article "Empfindsamkeit und gesellschaftliches Bewußtsein", focuses on the social realm in the novel. He too regards Sternheim's contemporary reception as based on a false evaluation of this novel. He asserts, "Der zeitgenössischen Kritik entging das dem

¹⁷Burghard Dedner, Topos, Ideal und Realitätsspostulat . . ., in: Studien zur Deutschen Literatur, hrsg. v. R. Brinkmann, F. Sengle und K. Ziegler, (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1969), p. 126, hereafter cited as Dedner.

¹⁸Dedner, p. 65.

Fräulein von Sternheim implizite konservative gesellschaftliche Bewußtsein."¹⁹ Hohendahl then examines these social elements in their conventional, traditional context.

He presents LaRoche as supportive of the status quo. The heroine's charitable activities are, he believes, without any serious progressive overtones: "Der Anblick von Leiden rührt die Heldin, bringt sie jedoch niemals dahin, institutionalisierte Ungleichheit in Frage zu stellen."²⁰ Neither is LaRoche's criticism of the upper class regarded as progressive. Instead he sees it as a confirmation of the necessity of the status quo: "Die Kritik der höfischen Welt im Namen der Innerlichkeit dient der Rechtfertigung der Ständeordnung."²¹

The novel's conventional qualities are projected in a lacklustre framework. In comparison to Richardson,¹ Hohendahl puts LaRoche far behind. He calls Lord Derby "eine blasse, psychologisch wenig überzeugende Imitation des Lovelace".²² Even the motives she gives her characters do not match those of her English model. He credits Richardson with a far more refined presentation as

¹⁹Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Empfindsamkeit und gesellschaftliches Bewußtsein . . .," in: Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft, (Stuttgart: A. Krömer Verlag, 1972), bd. 16, p. 198, hereafter cited as Hohendahl.

²⁰Hohendahl, p. 198.

²¹Hohendahl, p. 198.

²²Hohendahl, p. 196.

opposed to LaRoche's rational stereotyping: "die Subtilität widersprüchlicher Motive, die Lovelace' Charakter interessant machen, ist hier zur eindeutigen moralischen Formel reduziert."²³ This is exactly the opposite of the view taken by Ridderhoff in 1907 and by Spickernagel and Touaillon!

LaRoche's depiction of the social theme is not excluded from criticism. He treats Richardson's presentation as realistic and exciting while LaRoche's is viewed as conventional and therefore boring: "Während Richardson reale soziale Abstufungen nachzeichnete, forcierte Sophie von LaRoche den Gegensatz von Hof-und Landleben, griff also auf einen konventionellen Topos zurück."²⁴

Hohendahl like Dedner aligns the novel with both the "Empfindsamkeit" and the "Aufklärung". Evidence of the former is illustrated in the title of his article; evidence of the latter is illustrated in his discussion of the heroine, of whom he proclaims "Sie nimmt Wirkliches nur wahr gefiltert durch die Grundbegriffe der populären Aufklärungsphilosophie."²⁵

Unlike Spickernagel, Hohendahl finds a wide abyss separating the characters of Werther and Sternheim. Socially, he treats them as two opposite beings: "In der

²³ Hohendahl, p. 196.

²⁴ Hohendahl, p. 196.

²⁵ Hohendahl, p. 196.

Tat gelingt Werther nicht mehr, was für Sophie von Sternheim selbstverständlich ist: sich zu einem nützlichen Mitglied der ständischen Gesellschaft auszubilden."²⁶ While Sternheim incorporates the "Aufklärung" ideal of individual social responsibility, Werther's self-centred world surpasses these rational boundaries.

Emotionally, these two characters are also different. He refers to Werther as a "Schwärmer"²⁷, thereby indicating an excess of feeling. Sternheim on the other hand is shown as representing a balanced, moderate outlook, i.e. "das harmonische Weltbild der Aufklärung".²⁸

Similarly Hohendahl differentiates between two types of "Empfindsamkeit" and uses the above-mentioned characters to illustrate each. Sternheim's rational adherence to the laws of society is the demonstration of "einer guten, d.h. gesellschaftlich affirmativen"²⁹ version of "Empfindsamkeit". Werther signifies the "Radikalisierung"³⁰ of this concept "d.h. einer sozial destruktiven Empfindsamkeit".³¹ He sees only Sternheim's "Empfindsamkeit" as being related to the "Aufklärung".

²⁶ Hohendahl, p. 199.

²⁷ Hohendahl, p. 204.

²⁸ Hohendahl, p. 199.

²⁹ Hohendahl, p. 199.

³⁰ Hohendahl, p. 199.

³¹ Hohendahl, p. 199.

The most recent critic to examine LaRoche's writing is Peter Petschauer. In his article "Sophie von LaRoche, Novelist between Reason and Emotion"³², published in 1982, he briefly discusses her first novel in a comparison to Enlightenment and "romantic" attitudes. He discusses the elements which he feels appear slightly progressive in their 18th century context and then outlines the basic reasons for their rapid decline to a moderate, banal status.

Petschauer focuses on the contrasting elements within the novel. His article once again brings Sternheim criticism back to its earlier stage, where it is regarded not as a unified presentation but as a novel of diverse qualities. His title reflects his view of the polarities within the novel. Unlike the other modern critics who incorporate the reason and emotion illustrated in the novel into the "Aufklärung", Petschauer differentiates between them. He appears to link reason to the Enlightenment and emotion to the Romantic movement. However, the latter quality is not treated as "empfindsam" but rather as a "Sturm und Drang" element. Evidence of this appears in the following passage: "Just as importantly, as sentimental as the novel is, some aspects of it are almost romantic in tone. This trend comes out in the intensity of some of the

³²Peter Petschauer, "Sophie von LaRoche, Novelist between Reason and Emotion," in: Germanic Review, No. 57 (1982), pp. 70-77. hereafter cited as Petschauer.

the passions described and of some of the intuitive behaviour illustrated."³³ Consequently, his focus on the duality within the novel is a reflection of the elements he feels are "Aufklärung" as opposed to those he regards as "Sturm und Drang".

In his view, the heroine belongs to the "Aufklärung" by virtue of her conventional and rational qualities. He refers to her as "the ideal female of some Aufklärer: traditionally trained and capable of leading a household: rational, reasonable, sensible and able to engage in mental activity."³⁴ He only allows her one progressive trait: "Nevertheless, and in spite of her domestic training, Sternheim was different in that marriage was not an absolute goal for her".³⁵ Only in the area of marriage and in Sternheim's role of not simply a housewife but as "the supportive and intelligent companion"³⁶ does Petschauer acknowledge elements pointing slightly ahead to Romanticism.

However what he calls "her own first steps beyond the Enlightenment"³⁷ is overshadowed by his emphasis on her inability to gravitate more towards the Romantic

³³Petschauer, p. 71.

³⁴Petschauer, p. 73.

³⁵Petschauer, p. 73.

³⁶Petschauer, p. 75.

³⁷Petschauer, p. 75.

movement. He sees LaRoche as unable to change with the times: "Sophie LaRoche presented and stood for ideals that were on their way out."³⁸ Consequently, her educational reforms are here labelled as "amateurish".³⁹

He concludes his article on an unflattering note which echoes the opinions of all of the previously discussed modern critics of her work: "Whether she understood or not, however, she did not make as profound a literary and educational contribution as the Romantics and leading educational reformers precisely because she remained convinced of the need for and validity of restrained behaviour, and because she was an outsider both to the movement and to the bureaucracies."⁴⁰

³⁸Petschauer, p. 74.

³⁹Petschauer, p. 74.

⁴⁰Petschauer, p. 75.

SUMMARY:

The ambivalent aspect of Sternheim is apparent in the contradictory elements at work in the novel. Rational, irrational and "empfindsam" properties co-exist in a world conceived by an author who herself is influenced by these divergent elements. LaRoche has an objective, i.e. a rational aim to educate and a subjective, i.e. an irrational need to write.

The main characters in the novel exhibit contrasting qualities. The rational Lord Derby is portrayed as the stereotyped villain. His character serves a didactic function. Lord Seymour, the hero, represents an irrational "empfindsam" figure, who is ruled by his emotions. Fräulein von Sternheim, the heroine, fluctuates between both of the above tendencies.

Examination of the novel's main themes gives further evidence of contradictions. The role of nature in the novel supports both impersonal observation and personal experience. The rational presentation encourages the objective study of nature for didactic reasons. The irrational outlook involves a world where nature's beauty is simply enjoyed for its own sake.

In the realm of education, the novel mainly focuses on a general, rational, society-oriented approach. Education means the mechanical learning of facts. Instruction is both sex - and class - conscious and the curriculum is structured according to the demands of the individual's role in society.

This approach is a conventional one. A personal element does come into the picture but only in a mild form. It involves a more intuitive base of education and gives individual considerations a major function in the structuring of the curriculum. This view is not as rigid and therefore is attached to a more progressive view.

There are two conflicting worlds within the theme of love-marriage. Lord Rich represents a reason-oriented love which is interchangeable with friendship. His brother Lord Seymour illustrates the opposite kind. He is controlled by intense, irrepressible feelings and experiences an irrational "empfindsam" passion. Fräulein von Sternheim is torn between her rational ideas on love and her "empfindsam" romantic feelings. She professes allegiance to the first view yet her instincts gravitate toward the second.

The social domain as represented in the novel is also beset by contradictions. LaRoche's main position is a rationally traditional one in which the status quo is justified by a divinely-guided order. The only kind of social reform applies to the individual's responsibility in fulfilling his duty towards the other classes of society. Philanthropy is a serious practical concern as is demonstrated by Oberst von Sternheim. A contrasting view to the one above appears in the heroine's irrational approach to charity. She is motivated by spontaneous "empfindsam" outbursts of "Mitleid". In addition, there is a slightly progressive note in the portrayal of a mixed marriage. Sternheim's mother

is allowed to marry someone lower in station, although this practice is not encouraged as a general rule.

In the metaphysical realm, a traditionally orthodox view exists alongside a more "empfindsam" pietistic one. The first view is society oriented. Religious life is regulated by formal rituals and dogmatic theories. According to the second view, the individual is encouraged to experience God personally and spontaneously. Emotions and inner reflections play a key role in the believer's life.

All of the above qualities are perceived in various ways by different critics. The contradictory reactions of LaRoche's contemporaries clearly draw attention to the contrasting elements in the novel. Sternheim receives an immense popularity in two opposing literary factions because of the ambivalent world it represents.

The established members of the "Aufklärung" understand the novel via the mind. They find their ideas well represented and focus on the novel's depiction of rationalistic concepts. Their reviews abound with words which are themselves employed by LaRoche, words such as "Belehrung", "Erziehung", "Tugend", "Moral", "Zufriedenheit", "Nützlichkeit", "Gelassenheit" and "Wohltätigkeit".

The younger advocates of the new irrationalism experience the novel in their hearts and souls. They identify with the heightened subjective world it presents and hail it as a revolutionary work. Their attention is absorbed by the rich emotional fibre as reflected in the

language and their reviews reverberate with the same terms they find in Sternheim , words like "Empfindsamkeit", "Empfindlichkeit", "Glück", Mitleid" and "Schwärmerei".

The next group of critics begins with Ridderhoff in 1895 and extends to Petschauer in 1982. Its criticism of the novel exhibits a distinct development which reflects not only differing individual opinions but differing attitudes to the literary concepts that have been applied to Sternheim.

The discussions of Ridderhoff, Spickernagel and Touaillon are mainly one-sided. They treat the novel as either rational, irrational or "empfindsam". They also show a growing awareness of subjective, original elements in LaRoche's work.

Brüggemann is the first critic to incorporate the elements which were previously singled out for recognition, into a complete, harmonious framework. He attaches this framework to the concept of "Aufklärung". His evaluation of the the novel's content coincides with a general trend towards a broadening of the concept of "Aufklärung" to include not only rational but "empfindsam" qualities.

The modern critics continue to regard the work as representative of the "Aufklärung" and consequently they do not find any contradictions in the work itself. Their reviews dwell on the conforming aspects of the novel and they focus on what they claim to be conventional and therefore trivial. Petschauer, the last modern critic, brings

Sternheim criticism back to its earlier stage. He examines LaRoche's novel from its two contradictory perspectives: reason and emotion. He links the former to the Enlightenment and the latter "Romanticism", i.e. Storm and Stress.

In spite of its initial success and the continuing controversy, Sternheim's popularity was short-lived. Since it reflected a period of transition in German literature, its popularity was directly linked to the length of this phase. Not only the novel but the author herself soon faded from view. Petschauer delineates the reason for this decline: "It was Sophie von LaRoche's dilemma that her life work fit into the critical moments of the transition from Enlightenment to Romanticism. Her tragedy as a writer was that she did not understand first, that her work was transitional and second, that leading the emerging Romantic movement required greater intelligence and flexibility than she had to offer . . . Her tragedy was intensified when she could not propel herself beyond her initial synthesis and espouse the extremism of the Romantics."¹

¹Peter Petschauer, "Sophie von LaRoche, Novelist between Reason and Emotion," in: Germanic Review No. 57 (1982), pp. 74-75.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

LaRoche, Sophie von. Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim.
In: Deutsche Literatur : Sammlung literarischer
Kunst-und Kulturdenkmäler in Entwicklungsreihen
Bd. 14. Hrsg. v. F. Brüggenmann. Leipzig : 1771;
Rpt. Leipzig : Philipp Reclam jun., 1938.

1. Criticism on Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim

Assing, Ludmilla. Sophie von LaRoche : Die Freundin
Wielands. Berlin : 1859.

Bach, Adolf. "Sophie LaRoche und ihre Stellung im
deutschen Geistesleben des 18. Jahrhunderts." In:
Zeitschrift für Deutschkunde. No. 40 (1926),
pp. 165-182.

Brüggenmann, Fritz. "Einleitung zum Nachdruck von Sophie
von LaRoche, Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim."
In: Deutsche Literatur : Sammlung literarischer
Kunst-und Kulturdenkmäler in Entwicklungsreihen.
Bd. 14. Hrsg. v. F. Brüggenmann. Leipzig :
Philipp Reclam jun., 1938, pp. 5-17.

Dedner, Burghard. Topos, Ideal und Realitätspostulat :
Studien zur Darstellung des Landlebens im Roman des
18. Jahrhunderts. In: Studien zur deutschen
Literatur Bd. 16. Hrsg. v. R. Brinkman, F. Sengle
und K. Ziegler. Tübingen : Max Niemeyer Verlag,
1969.

Flessau, Kurt-Ingo. Der moralische Roman : Studien zur
gesellschaftskritischen Trivialliteratur der
Goethezeit. In : Literatur und Leben Bd. 10.
Hrsg. v. Richard Alewyn und Herbert Singer.
Köln : Böhlau Verlag, 1968.

- Greiner, Martin. Die Entstehung der modernen Unterhaltungsliteratur : Studien zum Trivialroman des 18. Jahrhunderts. Hrsg. v. T. Poser. Hamburg : 1964.
- Halperin, Natalie. Die deutschen Schriftstellerinnen in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts : Versuch einer soziologischen Analyse. Diss. Frankfurt a.M. : Handelsdruckerei C. Trute. 1935.
- Hohendahl, Peter Uwe. "Empfindsamkeit und gesellschaftliches Bewußtsein : Zur Soziologie des empfindsamen Romans am Beispiel von La Vie de Marianne, Clarissa, Fräulein von Sternheim und Werther." In : Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft Bd. 16. Stuttgart : Alfred Kröner Verlag, 1972, pp. 176-207.
- Kluckhohn, Paul. Die Auffassung der Liebe in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts und in der deutschen Romantik. Tübingen : Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1966 (1.Aufl.:1922).
- Koenig-Warthaussen, G. v.. "Sophie von LaRoche geb. Gutermann." In : Lebensbilder aus Schwaben und Franken Bd. 10. (1966), pp. 101-125.
- Milch, Werner. Sophie LaRoche : Die Großmutter der Brentanos. Frankfurt a.M. : Societätsverlag, 1935.
- Miller, Norbert. Der empfindsame Erzähler : Untersuchungen an Romananfängen des 18. Jahrhunderts. München : 1968.
- [Musäus, Karl August] Review of Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim. In : Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek Bd. 16. Hrsg. v. F. Nicolai et al. (Berlin : 1772), pp. 469-479. Cited as Musäus in the thesis.
- Petschauer, Peter. "Sophie von LaRoche : Novelist between Reason and Emotion." In : Germanic Review No. 57. (1982), pp. 70-77.
- Review of Geschichte des Fräulein von Sternheim: Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen (FGA) 1772. In : Deutsche Literaturdenkmale Bd. 7. Berlin : 1907, pp. 85-86.

Ridderhoff, Kuno. "Einleitung zum Nachdruck von Sophie von LaRoche, Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim." In : Deutsche Literaturdenkmale Bd. 138. Berlin : 1907.

Ridderhoff, Kuno. Sophie von LaRoche, die Schülerin Richardsons und Rousseaus. Einbeck : J. Schroodter, 1895.

Schmidt, Erich. Richardson, Rousseau und Goethe. Jena : Frommannsche Buchhandlung - Walter Biedermann, 1875.

Spickernagel, Wilhelm. Die Geschichte des Fräuleins von Sternheim von Sophie von LaRoche und Goethes Werther. Diss. Greifswald : Hans Adler Buchdruckerei, 1911.

Sudhof, Siegfried. "Sophie Laroche." In : Deutsche Dichter des 18. Jahrhunderts : Ihr Leben und Werk. Hrsg. v. Benno v. Wiese. Berlin : Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1977, pp. 300-319.

Touaillon, Christine. Der deutsche Frauenroman des 18. Jahrhunderts. Wien : W. Braumüller, 1919.

Wesley, Margot. Das junge Mädchen im deutschen Roman des 18. Jahrhunderts bis zum Beginn des Sturm und Drang. Diss. Hamburg : Hans Christians Druckerei und Verlag, 1933.

2. Other Literature

Aus Herders Nachlaß Bd. 3. Hrsg. v. H. Düntzer und F.G. Herder. Frankfurt a.M. : Meidinger, 1856-57; Rpt. Hildesheim : G. Ohms Verlag, 1976.

Becker, Eva. Der Deutsche Roman um 1780. Stuttgart : J.B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964.

Briefwechsel zwischen Schiller und Goethe Bd. 3. Berlin : J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1892.

Bruford, W.H. Germany in the Eighteenth Century : The Social Background of the Literary Revival. Cambridge : University Press, 1935.

- Deboor, Helmut, Richard Newald. Geschichte der Deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart Bd. 6. München : C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1957.
- Emmel, Hildegard. Geschichte des Deutschen Romans Bd. 1. Bern : A. Francke AG Verlag, 1972.
- Herder, J.G. Briefe Bd. 2. Hrsg. v. Wilhelm Dobbek und Günter Arnold. Weimar : Hermann Böhlaus Nachfolger, 1977.
- Jäger, Georg. Empfindsamkeit und Roman Bd. 2. Stuttgart : W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1969.
- Kimpel, Dieter. Der Roman der Aufklärung. Stuttgart : Sammlung Metzler, 1967.
- Köster, Albert. Die Deutsche Literatur der Aufklärungszeit. Heidelberg : 1925.
- Krüger, Renate. Das Zeitalter der Empfindsamkeit : Kunst und Kultur des späten 18. Jahrhunderts in Deutschland. München : 1972.
- Lenz, J.M.R. "Pandämonium Germanicum." In: J.M.R. Lenz : Werke und Schriften Bd. 2. Hrsg. v. B. Titel und H. Haug. Stuttgart : Henry Goverts Verlag GmbH, 1967.
- Rehm, Walther. Geschichte des Deutschen Romans Bd. 1. Berlin : de Gruyter & Co., 1927.
- Sauder, Gerhard. Empfindsamkeit Bd. 1. Stuttgart : J.B. Metzler, 1974.
- Waldmann, F. "Lenz in Briefen". In: Euphorion : Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte Bd. 3. Hrsg. v. A. Sauer. Bamberg : C.C. Buchner Verlag, 1896; Rpt. Nendeln, Liechtenstein : Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1967, pp. 529-540.
- Wellek, Rene. Geschichte der Literaturkritik 1750-1950 Bd. 3. Berlin : Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1977.