The Spiritual Self in the Age of Reason:
Autobiographical Writing, 1700–1800

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

My project explores how certain German autobiographical texts of the eighteenth century craft a spiritual self. The texts analyzed expand the established canon of autobiographical writing by pairing each male voice with a female counterpart. These pairs include: the Lebensbericht von Anna Louisa Karsch (1761/62), Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling’s Lebensgeschichte (1777–1804), Karl Philipp Moritz’s Anton Reiser (1785), Angelika Rosa’s Lebenschicksale (1784/85), Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s “Die Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele” (1795/96) and Friederike Helene Unger’s Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele von ihr selbst geschrieben (1806). In each of these accounts the self does not replace the soul but rather incorporates it through its cultivation. Michel Foucault’s The Hermeneutics of the Subject (1981/82) and The Care of the Self (1986) as well as from Niklas Luhmann’s sociological model of the self as differentiated subjectivity, outlined in his essay, “Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus” (1989), provide the theoretical cues. I argue that the purpose of self-cultivation in the analyzed autobiographical accounts is to achieve socially recognizable individuality (Luhmann) through a transfer of spiritual practices into writing (Foucault). My study marks a significant departure from previous scholarship in revealing rhetorical, narrative, and conceptual continuities between Pietist confessions and supposedly secular accounts of individual life. Furthermore, my study finds significance in its ability to give voice to male as well as female perspectives in both canonical and non-canonical texts, showing how men and women take markedly different turns on the path towards the spiritual self.
I. INTRODUCTION

According to conventional narrative, autobiographical writing during the late eighteenth century experienced a tectonic shift from Pietist confessions to secular accounts of life lived with the change manifesting both in terms of terminology (from the soul to the self) and approach (from divine crafting to personal cultivation). My study aims to challenge this narrative. It breaks with existing scholarship, first, by highlighting the rhetorical, narrative, and conceptual continuities between Pietist confessions and supposedly secular accounts of individual life, and second by showing that the self did not replace the soul in a number of accounts but rather incorporated it. Autobiographical writing in the Age of Reason thus continued elements of the pietistic tradition and crafted, what I propose calling, the spiritual self.

My study takes certain theoretical cues from Michel Foucault’s *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (1981/82) and *The Care of the Self* (1986) as well as from Niklas Luhmann’s sociological model of the self as differentiated subjectivity, outlined in his essay, “Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus” (1989). Not only do Luhmann and Foucault set the standard for questions of ‘self-writing’ and individuality, but they also help explain how the mixing of the soul and self was made possible in eighteenth-century autobiographical writing. Luhmann describes how the differentiation of society into specialized functions (inversely mirrored in the individualization of its members) accounts for the dissemination of formerly religious practice into other fields. As the genre of autobiographical writing began to open up to other forms of self-writing, the spiritual practices attached to it also underwent change. In *The Care of the Self*, Foucault explains how certain spiritual practices earlier found within the pietistic confession – such as introspective reading – were reinterpreted and redefined by the modern individual. He argues that the modern individual selectively picks and chooses from a variety of “truths” that he
reads and then subjectively applies them to his self, rather than his soul (50–51). This spirituality is simply a slow, sustained and arduous work to bring into effect the practice of thinking differently and outside of the framework of traditional affiliations (Hermeneutics xxviii; Care 41). Operating in this way, certain autobiographical writing, found in eighteenth-century Germany, builds the foundation for modern spirituality.

Following the introduction, my study is divided into three chapters. Chapter One considers how two secularizing pietistic autobiographies – the Lebensbericht von Anna Louisa Karsch: In vier Briefen an Sulzer (1761/62) and Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling’s Lebensgeschichte (1777–1804) – incorporate piety into their cultivation of a professional self (Karsch as a poet and Jung-Stilling as a doctor). Chapter Two considers the process of self-cultivation in Karl Philipp Moritz’s Anton Reiser (1785) and Angelika Rosa’s Lebensschicksale (1784/85) and its oscillation between moments of proximity and distance to spiritual concerns. Chapter Three considers the cultivation of a secular, yet moral self in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s “Die Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele” (1795/96) and Friederike Helene Unger’s Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele von ihr selbst geschrieben (1806).

This study on the cultivation of the spiritual self gives voice to male as well as female perspectives in both canonical and non-canonical texts. It studies a wide range of foci, including professional development and morality, and shows how women take a specific path in this emerging spiritual self, while men take different turns. The gendered nature of this autobiographical writing is critical to understanding the shifting accounts of spirituality in the eighteenth century – a feature largely overlooked in the critical literature. This study not only seeks to highlight these varied and comparative voices, but more significantly to argue how each – both male and female – are equally complex. Finally, it will consider the ramifications for
these gendered spiritual selves, specifically, its positions within and relations to the place they strive to find in the world and to others. This includes both the aesthetic arrangement of each male and female (physiognomy, behavioral manifestations etc.), as well as how he or she in turn interacts with society at large.

A. Literary Criticism of Autobiographical Writing

This study begins by first providing a general overview to autobiographical criticism, outlining prevailing concerns with a specific focus on spiritual writing. Modern criticism of autobiography began at the turn of the twentieth century and, in this scholarly trajectory, a few major stages should be highlighted. William Spengemann, in his study *The Forms of Autobiography* (1980), observes: “One can discern in the criticism written over the past 50 years or so a shift of emphasis from the biographical and historical facts recorded in an autobiography, to the psychological states expressed in the text, to the workings of the text itself” (187). Sandra Frieden, in her 1983 dissertation entitled *Autobiographie: Self into Form*, traces a progression from a concern with “trying to establish degrees and criteria of truthfulness” (17) in autobiographies towards a psychologically-oriented line of inquiry, which “attempted to formulate a typography of autobiographical form as shaped by a specific type of creative consciousness” (19), and finally to a textual approach, which examined autobiography “as a primarily literary form [and] concentrated on the linguistic dynamics present between text and reader” (23). The following section chronicles how these various approaches – the historical-didactic, psychological, literary and feminist – are manifested in the criticism of spiritual autobiographies.
Twentieth-century criticism of autobiography may be said to begin with Georg Misch’s four-volume work *Geschichte der Autobiographie* (1907–1956). Misch is mostly interested in biographical and historical facts recorded in an autobiography and, as such, his work gives particular focus to autobiography as a document of intellectual history (‘Geistesgeschichte’), beginning from the ancient civilization of the Middle East to Late Antiquity. He does touch upon the genre of spiritual autobiographies within this ancient past thus providing a helpful precursor to my study; however, he gives greater precedence to the Greeks and their models. Spiritual autobiographies, he argues, are neither a strictly religious endeavor nor a strictly modern writing, but rather a mix of religion and philosophy. Misch describes their advent during the Hellenistic period, a time in which philosophy was put on par with religious revelation (largely on account of man’s confidence in scientific and technical civilization being shattered by the destruction of the security of life in the national political order, in particular as a result of the downfall of the Roman Republic). This mixing of religion and philosophy within autobiographical writing lent itself to transcendentalism, a new metaphysical feeling for life in which autobiographical writing now dared to portray a soul in its journey through life (357). Examples of this form of writing range from Marcus Auerlius’ *To Myself* to Gregory of Nazianzus’ *On Virginity* to St. Augustine’s *Confessions*. The philosophical elements in these writings depict how the individual sees (‘discovers’) himself as a separate entity apart from his fellows, i.e., as independent and responsible. The result of this separation, Misch argues, is what then encouraged a religious sort of self-scrutiny, an activity that became an integral part of the individual’s personal life, helping him become conscious of his own powers and purposes. It is in these writings that self-communion was elevated to a new level, an intercourse that paralleled the process of spiritual reflection, which was described as the soul’s conversation with itself. Misch, in the vein of early
criticism, concludes by casting a rather didactic light on the reading of these autobiographies, arguing that these individual lives and life struggles were seen as sources of inspiration and instruction.

Roy Pascal’s study, *Design and Truth in Autobiography* (1960), provides a very narrow analysis of the history of autobiographies. His study is divided into three areas: first, the history of autobiography as a literary genre; second, the structure of autobiography and its various subtypes; and, third, the issue of truth in autobiography. Pascal begins his study with an attempt to clarify autobiography as a genre, comparing it with diaries, memories and philosophical reflections. His definition, however, proves problematic in that he argues that autobiographical writing deals only with representations of the self. He states that autobiography is “historical in its method, and at the same time . . . represents the self in and through its relations with the outer world” (149–150). He states further that autobiography is specifically defined in terms of “a preoccupation with the self which . . . holds the balance between the self and the world, the subjective and the objective, and . . . is inspired by a reverence for the self . . . in its delicate uniqueness” (180–81). Pascal’s definition is limited to distinctively Western, modern and in particular masculine categories. Not only are most women and Third World autobiographers automatically excluded, but, more significantly for this study, so too is confessional literature. He allows no room for writings that deal with spirituality, the soul or the divine. Instead, for Pascal, the autobiography is marked by “extraordinary psychological insight” (30), e.g., reflections on childhood, the building of a personality and the story of a man’s theoretical understanding of the world, which for him only begins with the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and William Wordsworth.
James Olney’s *Metaphors of Self* (1972), in contrast, offers the broadest definition of autobiographical writing to date. Olney broadens autobiographical theory with a new and deeply subjective understanding of the relation between experiences and its written records. He states, “I am more interested in why men write autobiographies . . . than I am in the history of autobiography or in its form per se. I am interested, in other words, in the philosophy and psychology of autobiography” (vii–viii). His selection of texts thus neither follows a certain chronology or pattern, but rather only those that align with his theory are chosen. These include: Michel de Montaigne’s *Essays* (1580), Carl Jung’s *Memories, Diaries, Reflections* (1961), and T.S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets* (1943). Olney argues further that every individual possesses a universal creative impulse and that through writing he or she uses the artifices of metaphor to thrust an internal selfhood onto an external reality and mold everything to its own shape: “Man creates, in fact, by the very act of seeking, that order that he would have” (4). That is, each autobiographer recreates his or her own self through metaphor and establishes a philosophy, psychology and poetics for the autobiographical act. Furthermore, if every individual enacts this based on his or her own personal encounters with culture, no uniformity of autobiography can ever be determined. Olney asserts that the “definition of autobiography as a literary genre seems to me virtually impossible, because the definition must either include so much as to be no definition, or exclude so much as to deprive us of the most relevant texts. Either way, definition is not particularly desirable or significant” (38–39). The problem with this argument, however, is that it divorces autobiography from history, narrative, the wrestle with truth, and from traditions of genre with their expectations and surprises. Olney rejects any notion of genres, such as confessional literature or secular accounts of life lived, and as such he does not find either continuities or distinctions between these various types of writing. Instead, he allows every
autobiography to encompass every quality; they are at once conscious and unconscious, individual and universal, physical and transcendent, about both man and God.

Charles Taylor’s *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (1989) takes a philosophical approach, focusing on how certain spiritual elements characterize our modern identity and with it our modern sense of self. He argues that this richness and complexity of the spiritual past cannot be grasped “unless we see how the modern understanding of the self developed out of earlier pictures of human identity” (2) and, as such, he attempts to define the modern identity from its spiritual genesis. To accomplish this, his book is divided into three major sections. In the first section, Taylor traces spiritual writing from St. Augustine through Rene Descartes and Michel de Montaigne, arguing that during this period, this writing was characterized by a modern inwardness, the sense of ourselves as beings with inner depths, and the connected notion that we are selves. To this he adds two other facets to the self: moral sources and the “inability to will fully” (185). In the second section, he traces spiritual writing from the Reformation through the Enlightenment, arguing that during this period the self undergoes a significant transformation: “By the turn of the eighteenth century, something recognizable like the modern self is in process of constitution, at least among the social and spiritual elites of northwestern Europe and its American offshoots. It holds together, sometimes uneasily, two kinds of radical reflexivity and hence inwardness, both from the Augustinian heritage, forms of self-exploration and forms of self-control” (185). Taylor highlights how the self begins to gain “self-responsible independence” (185) on the one hand and “recognized particularity” (185) on the other hand. Furthermore, it sheds its earlier conceptions of faith, sin and morality. In contrast, “thought and feeling – the psychological – are now confined to minds” (186). In his third and final section, Taylor describes the origins of a new moral source, namely
the expressivist notion of nature, beginning in the late eighteenth century, and he traces its development through the twentieth century.

Paul Miller, in his book, *Postmodern Spiritual Practices: The Construction of the Subject and the Reception of Plato in Lacan, Derrida and Foucault* (2007), provides a good example of the direction in which spiritual autobiographical writing has moved within postmodern scholarship. Miller explores how modern autobiographies turn to the ancient world in order to examine the sources of the self. He stipulates at the beginning of Chapter One, “Remaking the Soul: Antiquity, Postmodernism and Genealogies of the Self,” that his connection of these modern texts to antiquity is informed by a vast array of postmodern French intellectuals, including Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Michael Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Serres, Emmanuel Levinas and feminists such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous (1). Using the concepts of Lacan, Derrida and Foucault, Miller argues that the postmodern perspective on the relationship between modern autobiographies and antiquity is a commitment to “history and indeed to objectivity to the precise degree that it is committed to difference, to seeing the ancient world not as our reflection or legitimation, but as the intimate other who is also always already part of the same, both different from and yet formative of our identity, and hence able to serve as a means of refashioning it” (11). It is the space of difference between the archeology of antiquity and modern autobiographies that is of interest for postmodern thinkers. Unlike the moderns, such as Jean Sartre, Albert Camus and Jean Anouilh, who sought to identify the present with the past, the postmoderns “seek to rethink the present through an encounter with the otherness of the past” (18). That is to say that, according to postmodern thinkers, modern autobiographies do not directly combine elements of religious and secular forms from the past, but rather use them as a foundation to create a third, alternative form of self-relation both to the
Christian archetype of confession and to that of the Greek models of the *Hupomnēmata* and the correspondence (26).

Chloë Taylor, in her recent book *The Culture of Confession from Augustine to Foucault: A Genealogy of the “Confessing Animal”* (2009), takes a unique perspective, arguing that every form of self-writing in every period of history are all different, and indeed exclusive, forms of confession. Within each medium, the individual reveals certain truths about him- or herself. Her approach incorporates Freudian thought and takes on an explicitly psychological approach. In her first chapter, “Confession from Antiquity to the Counter-Reformation,” Taylor first highlights the confessions of Biblical times (from the Old Testament, the Psalms and the Prophets to Paul), the purpose of which is twofold: to confess sins and then give thanks to God. Both of these acts of confession are not done autonomously, but rather in response to Biblical commands. This act, particularly in the Old Testament, was verbal as well as communal and hence public, e.g., Nehemiah 9. The act of confession, she argues, is then re-positioned in the autobiographical writings of Greek antiquity – the *Hupomnēmata* and the correspondence – so as to speak only of external truths as opposed to internal truths, i.e., one’s sins. The aim here became not so much the revelation of truths about one’s character, but rather how well one has conformed to certain ideas of ethical behavior in action. Finally, in these writings, the impetus is also different: the ancients sought to achieve self-transformation and mastery. In other words, self-examination through writing was conducted in order to become autonomous, not obedient (14–16). In the medieval and early modern Christian period, confession once again took a verbal form, but this time according to Catholic laws and legislations, which did not necessarily adhere to Biblical law. For example, an individual was forced to confess now to a priest, not God, in a confessional box or risk excommunication (52). In Chapter Two, “Confession and Modern
Subjectivity,” Taylor addresses the phenomenon of the autobiography in the modern period. In it, she argues, the modern individual still has the need to confess the truth about oneself, but now with different aims of inquiry. She argues that the examinations of the private lives, actions and thoughts of individuals are no longer undertaken within the context of Christianity, but rather by the economists, the demographers, scientists and doctors for the purpose of psychological examinations (68).

Finally, feminist interest in autobiography has only increased greatly in the last few decades. The major criticism on women and autobiography include: Estelle C. Jelinek’s The Tradition of Women’s Autobiography (1986), Sidonie Smith’s Subjectivity, Identity and the Body: Women’s Autobiographical Practices in the 20th century (1993), as well as several anthologies presenting the views of many, such as De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women’s Autobiography, edited by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (1992). The major focus of these female scholars is, in the same vein of postmodern and deconstructionist thought, to remove the West’s master (and masculine) discourses on the self. For example, in a jointly-written introduction to De/Colonizing the Subject, Smith and Watson argue for the removal of “the imperialist presumptions underlying Western idealization of the individual” (xxvi). These feminist arguments, to a large extent, demand that the female self be studied and theorized differently from the masculine self. Jelinek argues “different criteria are needed to evaluate women’s autobiographies, which may constitute, if not a subgenre, then an autobiographical tradition different from the male tradition” (6). In particular, she highlights two distinguishing elements. First, women autobiographers more often concentrate on their personal lives – “domestic details, family difficulties, close friends, and especially people who influenced them” (6) – whereas male autobiographers emphasize their connectedness to the rest of society,
their professional and intellectual lives and their life studies. Second, contrary to common stipulation, not all women write in an autobiographical mode that is introspective or intimate. Such a gendered analysis would have implications for any form of self-writing, including spiritual autobiographies.

B. Eighteenth-Century Autobiography


In his early study, *Identität und Rollenzwang* (1971), Bernd Neumann combines Freudian psychology with a sociological perspective primarily influenced by David Riesman’s *The Lonely Crowd* (1950). His purpose is to provide a psychological interpretation of autobiographies distinctly different from Georg Misch’s *Geschichte der Autobiographie*. His sixth chapter, “Von der ‘Vorsehung’ zum ‘Lebensplan’: Die Entwicklung der kleinbürgerlich-pietistischen Lebensbeschreibung zur großbürgerlich-‘klassischen’ Autobiographie,” is pertinent for the present study. In this chapter, he categorically differentiates between the pietistic confession and the secular autobiography. Neumann argues that the former (which he describes as “eine

Neumann compares Moritz with Jung-Stilling, arguing that *Anton Reiser* acts as a counter-piece to the *Lebensgeschichte* in that the protagonist continues to wrestle with the question of providence throughout his life (though, simultaneously, he also questions if in fact something more abstract, like fate, is at work). Neumann argues that thereafter the pietistic confession with its concept of providence comes to an abrupt halt and in its place arose the secular autobiography with its emphasis on entelechy: “Wird also die göttliche ‘Vorsehung,’ die das Leben des Individuums bestimmt und bestreitet, in dieses verlegt, wird sie also internalisiert und säkularisiert zugleich, so entsteht der Begriff der Entelechie” (137). Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811–33), he argues, is the first of these new, secular autobiographies to portray the concept.
Ralph-Rainer Wuthenow provides a comprehensive sweep of autobiography’s historical development in *Das Erinnerte Ich: Europäische Autobiographie und Selbstdarstellung im 18. Jahrhundert* (1974), tracing the history of individuality from its stirrings in the Renaissance, to its fruition in the eighteenth century, its influence on the nineteenth century, and, finally its destabilization in the twentieth century. He gives great attention to German autobiographical writing throughout these periods, but he also compares and contrasts them to their English and French counterparts. Chapter Three, entitled “Gottes Führung im Dasein, philosophischer Lebenslauf und psychologischer Roman,” argues that the fundamental difference between religious and secular autobiographies in Germany during the eighteenth century is their depiction of the individual – the former highlights its passivity and the latter its agency. Wuthenow contends that there are four main religious writings that embody the passive individual: Jung-Stilling’s *Lebensgeschichte*, Ulrich Bräker’s *Lebensgeschichte und Natürliche Ebenteuer des Armen Mannes im Tockenburg* (1790), Salomon Maimon’s *Geschichte des eigenen Lebens* (1792/93), and Moritz’s *Anton Reiser*. Jung-Stilling, he argues, is the most passive, allowing God alone agency in terms of his development both spiritually and professionally: “Demütig und selbstbewußt zugleich, erscheint es Jung-Stilling, als offenbare sich Gott im Leben als das zufällige Wirken, das dem Dasein erst Halt und Richtung verleiht, so daß der Erzähler, im I. Teil noch weniger auffällig, dann aber immer deutlicher, den Finger Gottes faßt” (81). Ulrich Bräker and Salomon Maimon, by contrast, though they too remain by degrees passive, at the very least wish to be more actively engaged within the world. Finally, Wuthenow argues that the psychological approach in Moritz’s *Anton Reiser* goes the furthest in trying to achieve agency: “Hier setzt sich Moritz von der Konvention des zeitgenössischen Romans deutlich ab, wie er auch auf Mannigfaltigkeit der Charaktere verzichten will, geht es doch vor allem um die ‘innere
Geschichte’ eines Menschen, so soll die Vorstellungskraft konzentriert, der Blick der Seele in sich selbst nicht abgelenkt, sondern geschärft werden” (112). However, in the end, Reiser’s inward turn alone is insufficient to empower his own self as an individual. In his final chapter, Wuthenow attributes the first successful depictions of active individuality in Germany to three clearly-delineated secular autobiographies: Nicolas Nicolas Chamfort’s *Maximen, Gedanken und Charakterzüge* (1795), Georg Christoph Lichtenberg’s *Mosaik aus Fragmenten* (1783) and Jean Paul’s *Zukünftiger Lebenslauf* (1799).

Klaus-Detlef Müller’s study, *Autobiographie und Roman* (1976), which specifically focuses on autobiographical writing in the second half of the eighteenth century, traces a chronological organization of the texts from a mundane, practical account of one’s life form to a display of artistic complexity. The former, which he describes as “Autobiographie als einer Zweckform” (6), encompasses both intellectual and religious autobiographies. Both of these, he argues, were written by the writer for either his descendants or community. In contrast, the latter, epitomized by Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, is written for the writer’s own enjoyment. As his title suggests, Müller is primarily interested in the role that the novel (as opposed to confessional literature) played in this transformative process. He argues that fictional techniques, such as self-reflection and ironical distance, were adopted to autobiography not to falsify the account, but to make it truer to life. Objectivity was replaced with subjectivity and truth with imagination. In particular, “Die Anspruch der Selbstdarstellung und die Verpflichtung gegenüber der historischen Gegenständlichkeit seien aufgegeben” (59). This fleshing out of the story begins to become the body which displaces factual content and, ultimately, leads to a fictionalization of the autobiographical account. However, when this occurred, the work ceased to be true autobiography and became a novel of education (*Bildungsroman*).
Günther Niggl’s seminal work, *Geschichte der deutschen Autobiographie im 18. Jahrhundert* (1977), represents one of the most detailed accounts of the transition of the soul to the self in the autobiographies at the onset of modernity. Niggl argues that modern autobiographies are the product of a secularization of the Pietist confessions. However, his work highlights almost exclusively the influence of the confessions of the Moravian community that are written in the form of introspection (*Selbstbeobachtung*) as opposed to the contribution of Pietist confessions in general, which also include conversion stories (*Bekehrungsgeschichte*), e.g., Philipp Jakob Spener’s and August Hermann Franke’s writings, as well as the professional autobiographies (*Berufsautobiographie*). Nevertheless, he states that the Pietist introspection of every state of the soul and its various moods allowed for the shift from the exploration of one’s soul for religious purposes to a self-exploration with a psychological end. Specifically, within early modern autobiographies, and, in some of these texts, these concepts were mixed: “Nur im Tagebuch konnte die Selbstbeobachtung der Frommen jene minutiöse Aufmerksamkeit auf jede seelische Stimmung und Schwankung erreichen, die schließlich den Sprung ermöglichte, die Erkundung des eigenen Ich nicht mehr als religiöses Mittel, sondern als psychologischen Selbstzweck anzusehen” (65). However, Niggl is not arguing that the psychological exploration of the self in modern autobiographies grew directly out of the religious confessions, but rather that the pietistic tradition of journaling (*Tagebuchkultur*) with their practice of meticulous self-scrutiny influenced the later psychological autobiographies. Furthermore, though Niggl analyzes a wealth of texts, he only gives credence to male autobiographies, such as those written by Goethe, Moritz, Jung-Stilling and Maimon. He argues that the autobiographical writings of Jung-Stilling and Moritz exist as variations of the Moravian confession, while the writings of Goethe and Maimon embody a typological mixing of both Pietist and secular forms, along with the element
of adventure. Jung-Stilling’s *Lebensgeschichte* incorporates elements of both the inner and the outer person, the soul and the self. Niggl interprets the successes and failures both in Jung-Stilling’s private and professional life as caused by his acts of obedience or disobedience (73). Moritz’s *Anton Reiser* also incorporates a mixing of the state(s) of the soul with an external self, i.e., a dichotomy of emotions and knowledge. Niggl argues that by analyzing his emotions, moods and thoughts in a distanced, critical retrospection, an understanding of the self, including its relation to the world and purpose, is made clear (69). Finally, Niggl claims that Goethe’s “Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele” is a revision of a Moravian confessional narrative but not comparable. In fact, he argues that this confession is an inversion of the religious into a psychological confession in order for Goethe to achieve psychological secularization for the protagonist under the guise of a religious scheme (124–27).

Fredric S. Steussy, in his study *Eighteenth-Century German Autobiography: The Emergence of Individuality* (1996), examines modern individuality in eighteenth-century autobiography. He focuses on the various and tentative manifestations of individuality in German autobiography in the three decades before the first appearance of Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit* in 1811. For Steussy, Goethe’s autobiography “represents the full realization of modern individuality” (27). He first argues that the emergence of individuality prior to Goethe did not proceed in strict chronological order, but rather was largely determined by social environment and educational opportunities (27–28). This is because of certain “factors which contributed to self-image and formation of character”, including “social environment and educational opportunities” (28). Second, in this non-uniform pattern, he examines how a variety of texts treat their “inner life” or “personality” (4). On the basis of important shared characteristics, his nine autobiographers are divided into three groups. The first, entitled “individuality suppressed”, consists of Peter
Prosch’s *Leben und Ereignisse* (1789), Johann Christian Brandes’ *Meine Lebensgeschichte* (1799) and C.F. Shubart’s *Leben und Gesinnungen* (1791). The second group, “individuality nascent”, includes Johann Gottfried Seume’s *Mein Leben* (1809), Maimon’s *Lebensgeschichte* (1792/93) and C.F. Laukhard’s *Leben und Schicksale* (1792–1803). Finally, the last group, “individuality emergent,” consists of Karl Friedrich Bahrdt’s *Geschichte seines Lebens* (1791), Bräker’s *Lebensgeschichte* and Moritz’s *Anton Reiser*. In his conclusion, Steussy makes three broad claims. First, he shows how several of these autobiographers did not come from the aristocratic or middle-class elite, but rather were from more humble origins. Second, he argues that “autobiographers turned away from a predetermined ideal, commensurate with one’s place in society and [moved] towards an acknowledgement and acceptance of the personal and idiosyncratic, that each person represents one unique and unrepeatable form of being human” (130). Third, Steussy makes clear that these modern autobiographies were able to take shape due to the decline of religion.

In his book, *The Romantic Subject in Autobiography* (2000), Eugene Stelzig provides a helpful analysis on the self in modern autobiography. In his introductory chapter, he explores three main ideas: how the modern self came about, the theodicy of the self, and the relationship between the self and *Bildung*. In regard to origins, Stelzig makes an explicit connection to Protestantism and more specifically their push toward inwardness. Beginning with St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, he argues, introspection is “increasingly secularized” (3) such that by the time of Rousseau and Goethe, the search within is no longer for an encounter with God but rather for one’s own self-conception. This phenomenon links itself to the theodicy of the self. He argues that “in the context of a secularized view of the world,” in which God has largely dropped out of the picture, modern autobiographers are simply concerned with discovering a more
personal and subjective “inner life, inner light” (11). He further states, “Theirs is a vague religiosity both secularized and individualized, which transfers – in the well-known Romantic redistribution – to the mind and nature the powers traditionally reserved to the deity” (11).

Finally, Stelzig highlights the emphasis on Bildung (education, growth, development, process) in the modern autobiography. He argues that, underlying the conception of the modern self, is an “imaginative investment in nature and the organic” combined with a “spiritual interest in the formative stages of their budding lives, which they render with particular power and varying degrees of vividness and intensity of feeling” (14). That is, the developmental model of the self is likened to the metamorphosis of a plant: “being is becoming” (14). The self, in contrast to the soul, has new emphases: agency (e.g., inborn capacities) as opposed to passivity, fate instead of providence, freedom and necessity instead of obedience, and a more biological and ecological as opposed to missional relationship to the world.

Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf’s Autobiographie (2000) is divided into three sections: theories of autobiography, the history of autobiography and, bibliography. In her historical cataloguing of autobiographies, she provides a close analysis of seventeenth- and eighteen-century writings under a sub-section entitled, “17./18. Jahrhundert: Innen-Welt-Produktion.” She first begins by looking at the transition from renaissance autobiographies to the pietistic confession, arguing that in the latter one finds the first inward turn in self-writing: “In Anbetracht der politisch-sozialen Begrenzheit des kleinbürgerlichen Daseins wendet sich der Blick von der äußeren sozialen Wirklichkeit ab und konzentriert sich auf die Schilderung der eigenen Seelenzustände und inneren Befindlichkeiten” (140). Wagner-Egelhaaf also uses August Hermann Francke’s Lebenslauf (1690/91) as an example of the new narrative structure within pietistic confessions. She states, “Seine Lebensgeschichte ist geprägt von dem aus der Mystik
bekannten Gedanken der Wiedergeburt” (142). Francke thus minimalizes details such as birth, family and studies in order to provide a focused chronicling of his path to God, which comes to a climax in the moment of conversion. Thereafter, Wagner-Egelhaaf offers two analyses. In the first, she provides a detailed list and description of other pietistic confessions – from that of Johanna Eleonora Petersen (1644–1724) and Adam Bernd (1676–1748) to Johann Henrich Reitz’s Historie der Wiedergebohrnen (1698–1745) – in order to show how they follow Francke’s original model. In the second, she chronicles how later autobiographies – Jung-Stilling’s Lebensgeschichte, Moritz’s Anton Reiser and Bräker’s Lebensgeschichte – look back to the model of the pietistic confession, while also differing from it in dramatic ways. For example, she argues that Jung-Stilling minimizes the moment of conversion in his Lebensgeschichte in order to elevate the autopoietics of the individual: “Immer wider wird die Vorsehung beschworen und auf diese Weise der Jung-Stillingschen Lebensgeschichte eine teleologische Struktur verleihen, die, obzwar auf pietistischem Grunde erwachsen, keinen geistlichen Weg beschreibt, sondern eine weltliche Erfolgsgeschichte erzählen will” (151). In Anton Reiser, by contrast, the protagonist slowly replaces the inward-gaze at the soul with a psychological analysis of his own feelings: “Gleichermaßen wird auch das anfänglich hochgehaltene Prinzip der Selbstbeobachtung kritischer gesehen, insofern als sich die Erkenntnis durchsetzt, dass der Selbstbeobachter vor sich selbst posiert und eine Rolle spielt” (153). Finally, Wagner-Egelhaaf concludes that with the onset of Goethe’s Dichtung und Wahrheit, the pietistic confession is replaced with a new and modern form of self-writing, in which a definitive, transformative goal (e.g., conversion) is exchanged for an ongoing cycle of education and development.
C. Eighteenth Century Women’s Autobiography:

Studies on eighteenth-century women’s autobiography are rarely considered as a field in and of itself; rather, they are typically subsumed within greater studies on female writing, which include a wide range of texts, from letters and short stories to poetry. Two major studies on eighteenth-century female writing are Jeannine Blackwell’s and Susanne Zantop’s *Bitter Healing: German Women Writers 1700–1830* (1990) and Ruth P. Dawson’s *The Contested Quill: Literature by Women in Germany, 1770–1800* (2002). Blackwell’s and Zantop’s *Bitter Healing* makes available selected works of German women writers, including the pietistic confession of Johanna Eleonora Petersen and one of Anna Louisa Karsch’s autobiographical letters to Professor Sulzer, to an English-speaking readership, many for the first time. Their title *Bitter Healing* draws attention to the “[gendered], economic and intellectual constraints” (10) that women faced in their pursuits of creative production as well as “how women gradually succeeded in undermining or expanding those very same boundaries [through writing]” (11). Dawson considers the works of five female authors: Friderika Baldinger, Sophie von La Roche, Philippine Engelhard née Gatterer, Marianne Ehrmann and Sophie Albrecht. Her thesis is that “an unprecedented cluster of eighteenth-century German women, caught between their own wishes to become writers and society’s confining versions of femininity, validated themselves through their emotions and through the incorporation of feeling into their texts, a choice that had important consequences for their writing and for its later reception, indeed suppression” (19). Barbara Becker-Cantarino’s investigation of the development of women’s literature – and literacy – between 1500 and 1800 in *Der lange Weg zur Mündigkeit* (1987) fits within this vein of thought, as her primary focus is on how women struggled during this time to find a voice of
their own. The feminist leanings of these studies, while helpful, do not consider much outside of the realms of gender, roles and the beginnings of female independence (or at the very least their resistance to traditional patriarchal norms). Other topics such as spirituality are, unfortunately, largely overlooked.

Magdalene Heuser’s edited collection *Autobiographien von Frauen* (1996) provides a comprehensive sweep of female autobiographies from the seventeenth century through the present. In her introduction, Heuser sets up her study in direct contrast to Günter Niggl’s *Geschichte der deutschen Autobiographie im 18. Jahrhundert*. She argues that Niggl excludes female autobiographies from his analysis and that, when he does reference them, he relegates them to religious categories: “Die wenigen von ihm erwähnten Beispiele gehören in den Umkreis der sogenannten religiösen Autobiographie und damit des religiösen Schriftums, das als mit weiblichem Anstand vereinbar galt” (2). Heuser’s intent is to offer interpretations on female autobiographies that extend “außerhalb des Erwartungs- oder Interessenhorizonts” (2) in order to show how they differ from male autobiographies over the course of multiple centuries. Marion Roitzheim-Eisfeld’s chapter on Angelika Rosa, entitled, “Realität und Fiktion in der Autobiographie der Angelika Rosa,” has the most interest for the present study. In it, Roitzheim-Eisfeld focuses on how Rosa mixes within her life narrative the genres of autobiography and novel and, in particular, the motifs of “Entführung, Eifersucht, Reiseerlebnis, Zufall und Vorsehung” (198). She argues that Rosa’s *Lebensschicksale* finds its greatest affinities with Pierre de Marivaux’s *Marianne* (1731–45) and Christian Fürchtegott Gellert’s *Leben der Schwedischen Gräfin von G* (1748). In regard to Rosa and the Swedish countess, she states, “Erzählt wird die Biographie einer tugendhaften adligen Waisen. Aus Briefen verschiedener Adressaten und Tagebuchaufzeichnungen der Protagonistin läßt sich ds Leben der Sophie bis zu
ihrer Eheschließung mit Lord Seymour rekonstruieren. Am Ende der überstandenen Abenteuer steht jene Liebesheirat” (199). Roitzheim-Eisfeld highlights the significance in this connection, arguing that because of Rosa’s identification with Frau Sternheim, she is able to achieve a greater level of independence: “Als ein wichtiges Lesemotiv nennt Schön die Durchbrechung der weiblichen Isolierung durch Partizipation an fiktiven Begebenheiten und Identifizierung mit Romanfiguren. Defizite der Realität konnten mittels literarischer Teilhabe ausgeglichen werden” (199). For Rosa, this means gaining access to education usually limited to men and achieving a position within the greater society on her own. Unfortunately, Roitzheim-Eisfeld does not mention how this literary connection differs from male autobiographies of the time and, because of the specific intent to distance Rosa’s autobiography from religious confessions, she also omits the role that spirituality played in Rosa’s steps to independence.

Katherine Goodman’s *Dis/Closures: Women’s Autobiography in Germany between 1790 and 1914* (1986) provides the most focused study on women’s autobiography in the eighteenth century to date. Her study is significant in that, based on the fourteen autobiographies that she highlights, Goodman identifies as well as legitimizes a female autobiographical tradition in Germany. She argues that such a tradition is necessary because the parameters for the genre of nineteenth-century German autobiography are often cemented by Goethe (due to scholars such as Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Misch) and thus exclude women’s literary production. She states that “for reasons of history and biography women have not written autobiographies in the same forms as have men. Where they have attempted closed forms their own life stories have worked against them. Revealing disruptions result. In some cases, however, women have made innovative use of non-closed forms, and these dis/closures require us to re-examine the very definitions of the genre” (x). To treat women’s autobiography as its own separate genre would
also require an expansion of the research apparatus as well as new terminology. Goodman utilizes a critical appropriation of the works of Barthes and Foucault. Their “distrust of introspective observation” (xiii), their questioning of a privileged “truth,” and the notion of history as patriarchal domination all become the base for her approach to women’s autobiography. She rejects “the principle of a unified, harmonious individual” (xv) while demanding some – albeit shifting – concept of a self. She insists on both “history and genealogy” (xv); that is, both a social grounding of the individual and a Foucauldian recognition of the bias of the scholar. The result is that Goodman’s interpretations of her chosen autobiographies are rooted in the biographical background and historical setting of each individual author. Based on these parameters, religious upbringing is also considered. For example, she analyzes the life writing of Isabella von Wallenrodt (1740–1819), considering how Wallenrodt grapples with the form and propriety of women’s writing, while struggling for financial survival as a Pietist woman. However, other issues such as spirituality and the soul are still not included.

D. Theoretical Background

Much ground has been covered by these recent studies. However, German eighteenth-century autobiography has not yet been examined from the standpoint of a spiritual self; that is, how the self incorporates the soul into its cultivation. Furthermore, though modern criticism has loosely considered Michel Foucault’s postmodernist and largely analytical approach to the genre of literature in general on account of his essay, “What is an Author?” (1977), there has not yet been a study conducted in which spiritual autobiography is studied through the lens of his lectures, published under the titles The Hermeneutics of the Subject (1981/82) and The Care of
the Self (1986). Nor has a study ever dovetailed Foucault’s works on the self with Niklas Luhmann’s sociological model of the evolution of the subject, undertaken in several essays in his four-volume collection Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik (1980–95). The following will highlight the theoretical concepts of Foucault and Luhmann and the foundational framework they provide for an analysis of the spiritual self in eighteenth-century autobiographical writing.

Niklas Luhmann begins his study, “Individuum, Individualität, Individualismus,” with a helpful background on the semantic and structural changes taking place in the eighteenth century. He limits his focus to two major events: the Enlightenment and the French Revolution (“Individuum” 211). The former provided the impetus for the change in relationship between the individual and society. Philosophers, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, advocated that the divine right of the sovereign ought to be replaced by the authority of the people; and eventually the two major institutions in society – the church and the government – lost their authority. Other philosophers aided in these structural changes by providing an accompanying semantics to account for the changes they witnessed. Kant, for example, placed epistemology and its practical philosophy within a new framework, namely his transcendentalism. This new philosophy affirmed the individual’s gradual independence, and indeed authority, in society. Moreover it contended that a person should be understood on its own terms and analogous to the way in which the subject, according to German idealism, apprehends the world, i.e., through its own consciousness. Luhmann then argues that the French Revolution brought ordinary postulates, such as freedom, possessions, and security, from oppression to new heights, an act that inevitably altered societal relationships further. For example, the individual was beginning to define himself less through his social position and more through his experiences: “Die französische Revolution hatte zur Anerkennung allgemeiner Ordnungspostulate (Freiheit, Eigentum, Sicherheit vor
Unterdrückung) geführt, die ihrerseits das Individuum zum Maß der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse zu machen schienen . . . jedenfalls war klar, daß das Individuum auf das hier verwiesen war, nicht mehr durch Angabe seiner sozialen Position im Verhältnis zu anderen, nicht mehr durch seinen Stand definiert war; und daß die Gesellschaft, die ihm die Ausnutzung seiner individuellen Möglichkeiten garantierte, nicht mehr als Gesamtheit der geselligen Interaktionen zu begreifen war” (“Individuum” 211–12). The result of these two historical events was a shift in both the structure and semantics of society at the end of the eighteenth century, the implications of which can be seen in the reconstruction of society and its new relations with its members.

In regard to reconstruction, Luhmann describes how Kantian transcendentalism and French republicanism ushered in the evolution of society from a stratified organization to a functional differentiation. Stratification, he states, “differentiates the society into unequal subsystems” (“Differentiation” 33). It creates a superordinate/subordinate relationship between societal subsystems based on rank – the upper stratum consists of the nobility and the lower stratum of the peasants. Each of these subsystems is closed and its structure, stipulations and specialization are not open to change with respect to society at large. Luhmann further states, “The moral problem of equality and inequality is an inherent problem of stratified societies” (“Differentiation” 34). By this he means that religion and morality ensure the existence of the hierarchical order. In functional differentiation, by contrast, no subsystem is superior because none of them are able to control the other subsystems or society as a whole. Luhmann states, “Since all necessary functions have to be fulfilled and are interdependent, the society itself cannot give functional primacy to one of them” (“Differentiation” 35). These functions include clerics, politicians and teachers. Furthermore, these functions can only gain momentum if they
are organized around two different, complementary roles, such as clerics and laymen, politicians and the public, teachers and pupils; and, when they do gain momentum, society as a whole is able to attain “a higher level of compatibility of dependencies and independencies” (“Differentiation” 36). Finally, the formation of functional subsystems means a detachment of communication of a given subsystem from religion and morality. Thus, through this societal reconstruction from stratification to functional differentiation, systems became more open to various mixings as well as new complexities.

The rebuilding of society was inversely mirrored in the individualization of its members. Firstly, in the shift from stratified organization to functional differentiation, there was an immediate semantic shift from being understood as a person (Einzelperson) to an individual (Individuum). Secondly, the former identified a person through his or her inclusion within institutions and their accompanying hierarchies, whereas the latter through his or her exclusion. Luhmann describes how, within stratification, each member is defined in terms of inclusion, as belonging to a community, and thus experiences identity as pre-determined and pre-arranged. He or she belongs to a specific sub-order in society, i.e., a specific class, caste and state (“Individuum” 156–57). By contrast, within functional differentiation, each person becomes defined through modern exclusion, in which he or she no longer belongs to the community but rather stands outside of the systems. He or she may still have access to a certain system within society, but now can never fully belong to it alone. Henceforth, it was impossible for an individual to be fully part of the whole (“Individuum” 212). An immediate ramification for the exclusion of the individual from modern society was a loss of identity. There was a shift from being known and defined to unknown and undefined: “das Individuum [wird] nicht mehr als bekannt, sondern als unbekannt (als spontan, inkonstant, black box usw.) eingeschätzt”
Furthermore, the markers of identity inherently provided within a traditional society – name, familiarity, rights, duties and sense of belonging (“Individuum” 156) – were also no longer present. Because modern society could no longer offer individuals predefined social roles, the individual found the need to self-define.

The primary medium of this self-definition was writing. Over the course of the eighteenth century, there were hints of modern individuality in literature. Luhmann describes how earlier in both biographies and novels there were only character types, i.e., there were only portraits of good or bad characters: “Die Kommunikation über Menschen wurde auf dieser Basis typisiert; Charaktertypen, Portraits wurden als eigene Literaturgattung entwickelt . . . Und wie sollte man auch erwarten können, daß jemand sich für ein einmalig-konkretes Individuum interessiere, dessen Lebenskonstellation und dessen Merkmale so vielfältig und so zufällig zusammenkommen, daß es keinen vergleichbaren anderen Fall gibt?” (“Individuum” 174). In the autobiographical writing at the end of the eighteenth century, however, there were new mechanisms at work. First, the use of autobiographical writing as a genre of exploration was only made possible because, with the destabilization of institution throngs, practices formerly limited to religion, disseminated into other fields. Second, Luhmann utilizes Kant to describe how the individual used autobiographical writing as a means to construct (and thereby define) the self through a more complex arrangement. Complexity for the modern individual also became the new unity of diversity: “Neu ist dieses Konzept vor allem dank eines neuartigen Komplexitätsarrangements, das der kantischen Philosophie, obwohl mit ihren Mitteln nicht begründbar, zugrundeliegt. Komplexität ist ein Begriff für die Einheit einer Mannigfaltigkeit” (“Individuum” 212–13). Furthermore, the individual does not just define the self through these new writings, but, more specifically, he or she writes the self as a mechanism of reducing
complexity for the modern individual. In this capacity, he or she reconstructs the self as individual. Indeed, the individual, now partaking in multiple, functional systems, has innumerable possibilities, including “psychische Fähigkeiten, Kompetenzen, kognitive Komplexität, entwicklungslogische Errungenschaften usw.” (“Individuum” 154), which he or she uses to form a new and specifically written identity. Luhmann does not provide specific examples; however, based on his suggestion, my study focuses on how some individuals crafted the self between two specific pillars: God and gender.

Foucault posits a similar but different supposition for writing that crafts the self. He begins with thought-processes, arguing that the modern individual must utilize autobiographical writing as the medium through which to gain his or her own unique mode of thinking: “To bring into effect the practice of thinking differently, to modify oneself through the movements of thought, we have to detach ourselves from the already given systems, orders, doctrines and codes of philosophy; we have to open up space in thought for exercises, techniques, tests, the transfiguring space of a different attitude, a new ethos, the space of spirituality itself” (Hermeneutics xxviii). For Foucault, autobiographical writing, or self-writing, is the space of spirituality itself, the space where one’s thoughts can be transformed. He states, “Writing appears regularly associated with ‘meditation,’ with that exercise of thought on itself that reactivates what it knows, calls to mind a principle, a rule, or an example, reflects on them, assimilates them, and in this manner prepares itself to face reality” (“Self-Writing” 208). In this process, writing is approached twofold. First, the individual collects truths from the various writings that he or she reads; he or she then selects which of these truths to apply to the self; and finally he or she writes these truths down in his or her own book or journal. Thereafter, and second, the real work of spirituality begins. The individual must then return to these truths daily, meditate on them,
rehearse them and apply them. Foucault describes these moments as “times of retreat” (*Care* 50–51), in which “one can commune with oneself, recollect one’s bygone days, place the whole of one’s past life before one’s eyes, get to know oneself through reading, through the precepts and examples that will provide inspiration” (51). Eventually, these truths manifest themselves within the self. This, for Foucault, is the definition of spiritual transformation.¹

Furthermore, Foucault suggests two specific forms of autobiographical writing suitable to this task. The first are books of life (the *Hypomnema*) – “account books, public registers, or individual notebooks serving as memory aids” (“Self-Writing” 209). In them, one writes down certain guiding thoughts, examines and studies them, and finally uses them as the tool to mold the self. Foucault also states that “they constituted a material record of things read, heard, or thought, thus offering them up as a kind of accumulated treasure for subsequent rereading and meditation” (“Self-Writing” 209). The guiding thoughts that one wrote down were to be a framework of exercises that one frequently returned to for reading, rereading, meditating and conversing with oneself and others so that, over time, these thoughts would become deeply lodged in the soul. The second form of writing, the correspondence, conversely, is the practice of daily exchanges of letters in which all of one’s activities and thoughts are recorded and then given up to another’s gaze. Foucault describes how the correspondence is “by definition, a text meant for others, [but it] also provides occasion for a personal exercise” (“Self-Writing” 214). It is often the case that a correspondence takes place between a mentor and his student. Nevertheless, Foucault argues that “the letter one sends in order to help one's correspondent – advise him, exhort him, admonish him, console him – constitutes for the writer a kind of

¹ Though Foucault bases his ideas on ancient Greek models, this sort of spiritual reading and writing also finds its example within biblical models as well, in particular Acts and the Pauline epistles.
training: something like soldiers in peacetime practicing the manual of arms, the opinions that one gives to others in a pressing situation are a way of preparing oneself for a similar eventuality” (216). The correspondence thus becomes a mutual “soul service” between the mentor and student in that, as the person being directed progresses, he becomes more capable, in his turn, of giving opinions, exhortation and words of comfort to the one who has undertaken to help him (Care 54). In contrast to confessional narratives, these writings are not a narrative of oneself, but rather a shaping of the self; they are not an account of a spiritual experience (temptations, struggles, downfalls and victories), but rather a framework of exercises to be carried out: reading, meditating, conversing with oneself and others that over time brings about a form of spiritual transformation. This progressive recording of guiding thoughts becomes for the modern, secular authors their own version of a spiritual genealogy.

Foucault then stipulates the various forms of spiritual exercises that one can conduct within and through such autobiographical writing. He divides these practices into two categories: the care of the mind and testing procedures. The first category deals with practices and formulas to enable individuals to properly reflect on, develop and perfect the truths that they read and seek to apply to their own self. In regard to these, Foucault states, “There are the meditations, the readings, the notes that one takes on books or on the conversations one has heard, notes that one reads again later, the recollection of truths that one knows already but that need to be more fully adapted to one’s own life” (Care 51). In other words, these exercises require introspection, self-reflection, and memorization. Significantly, ample time is required for these exercises to be conducted. Foucault argues that this sort of practice takes time; that it is “a labor . . . And it is one of the big problems of this cultivation of the self to determine the portion of one’s day or one’s life that should be devoted to it. People resort to many different formulas. One can set
aside a few moments, in the evening or in the morning” (Care 50). In regard to the second category, Foucault argues that, once self-knowledge has been gained, it must then be tested in order to, first, measure what the individual is capable of and, second, to continue to assess any faults in his or her thinking. He states, “These have the dual role of moving one forward in the acquisition of a virtue and of marking the point one has reached . . . The tests enable one to do without unnecessary things, things that are not indispensable and essential” (Care 58). These tests include exercises of abstinence and self-control (in order to test which thoughts can be dismissed), self-examinations (both in the morning and evening so as to be mentally prepared for the day as well as to review one’s intellectual progress at the end of the day) and, finally, a steady screening of representations (in order to distinguish which thoughts are one’s own and which thoughts have been just simply accepted). Foucault concludes his section on testing procedures by arguing that, if the self is proven true, the result of these practices will be a conversion to self (an epistrophē eis heauton). That is, the individual will become his or her own “master, free of all dependents and enslavements” (Care 65).

Luhmann and Foucault outline two very different vantage points to the new, subjective self. Luhmann states that by crafting a self through the medium of writing, the evolution of the individual will be complete, but only if he or she assumes two fundamental premises: the first is that the individual holds the principle of individualization within him or herself and the second is that this individuality will be unique and incomparable. As such, the self is no longer identified through a pre-arranged position within society, but rather through its own subjective formulation. That is, now through the output of a series of specifications such as the spheres of milieu, education and one’s circle of friends: “Auch im 18. Jahrhundert bleibt also zunächst der naturale Begriff des Individuums erhalten, und entsprechend hält sich die Bestimmung des Menschen
durch seine Beziehung auf anderes und andere, durch Milieu und Schichtung. Der konkrete 
Mensch wird als Endstufe einer Serie von Spezifikationen des Menschen schlechthin, des home 
universel begriffen” (“Individuum” 191). In other words, the self engages as a conceptual mix, 
bundling social specializations that are both simple and gradable, indestructible and changing.
My study is chiefly interested in the degree to which one subsystem of society – religion – 
continues to contribute to self-formation and individuation, thereby creating the spiritual self.

Foucault, conversely, theorizes successful individualization in terms of the relationship 
that the individual has to his or her self. The final objective of the cultivation of the self is certain 
relations with oneself. That is, using the juridico-political model, the cultivated self is to be 
sovereign over itself, exert perfect control over itself, and be fully independent as well as fully 
self-possessed. The cultivated self thus has specific aesthetic (or behavioral) arrangements. This 
link between the care of the self and the attention to the body lends itself to my focus on the 
spiritual self. In regard to a mind-body dualism, Foucault argues that it is possible to construct “a 
grid of analysis that is valid for the ailments of the body and the soul” (Care 54). Physical 
disorders become indicators of moral disorders and, conversely, regimented and healthy living is 
a sign of successful individualization. As such, in my study, I will not only analyze successful 
cultivation of the self through the medium of writing, but also how the self is then aesthetically 
manifested both as a proof and legitimation of the author’s claims to cultivation. In doing so, the 
cultivation of the self will be seen as coextensive with the art of living (the famous tekhnē tou 
biou), the art of life or art of existence (Hermeneutics 86). Finally, from this, it follows that the 
self will have certain relations to others, namely that in caring for one’s own self, one encourages 
others through his or her very mode of living to do the same (Hermeneutics 7–8). It is this 
encouragement that, if successful, results in mutual soul services, i.e., cultivated selves
encouraging others to cultivate themselves. However, there is one final caveat: the degrees of cultivation still continue to vary on account of gender. It is important to consider the social spheres in which these authors were writing, with the women perhaps only being mediated through men, i.e., their husbands, fathers or uncles, and as such they were not always able to attain a truly independent and subjective identity.

These two approaches – Luhmann’s sociological model of the self and Foucault’s theories on the care of the self – frame my study of the spiritual self. I consider five components based on their theories in the following order. First, I consider the attitude that each of the authors has to his or her own self, for this is the starting point for self-cultivation in each writing and this desire, or interest, of self is catalyzed based on each author’s individual experiences. The second component is related to the first: I consider each author’s distancing from Pietism in order to cultivate the self, while at the same their retention of certain key concepts and semantics from the Pietist tradition. Third, I analyze the spiritual practices utilized by each. This includes the educational access that each author has, the kinds of books he or she reads and the type of exercises used. It also considers the variances between these elements based on gender. The fourth component provides the main focus within this process of self-cultivation: it looks at the moment of transformation (or conversion) for each author. That is, the moment of his or her individualization. Finally, fifth, I consider the ensuing aesthetic arrangement (or lack thereof) for each author, including how each one is unique.
E. The History of Pietist Confessions:

Before proceeding to an outline of my dissertation project, it is necessary to first explain which autobiographical writing I am applying to Foucault’s and Luhmann’s theories and why. To do so, I provide below a brief history of the pietistic confession throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, highlighting the position of my chosen texts therein and their suitability for analyzing the spiritual self.

Pietist autobiographies became a tradition in Germany in the seventeenth century. Called a ‘Lebenslauf’ (literally, ‘life’s course’), they were writings asked of all believers in organized groups such as the Moravian Brethren in Herrnhut (the Pietist community established by Count Zinzendorf in Saxony) in which they were required to record their own lives and conversion. Philipp Jakob Spener’s eigenhändig aufgesetzter Lebens-Lauff (1683–86) is considered one of the first pietistic confessions. Not published during his lifetime, it circulated in handwritten manuscripts as a model for others and was read at his funeral.\(^2\) “Spener’s autobiography is a rather short, condensed report with reflective comments on the most important events in his life; he represents himself as being guided by God to an exemplary life from birth to rebirth and beyond” (Becker-Cantarino, Pietism 40). He shows himself as a child exposed to dangerous influences but is rescued through his parents’ loving education, strict teachers, and influential godparents. He claims he learned early in life to prepare himself for the prospect of a rebirth in God. Spener also mentions his devotional readings of then popular works, such as those written by Johann Arndt. His conversion is not the central organizing moment of his writing, rather the

\(^2\) Spener’s autobiography appeared first in print as an appendix to the funeral sermon held for him in Conrad Gottfried Blanckenberg’s Das Leben der Gläubigen (1705). As an appendix to the funeral sermon for Spener under the title “Personalia” with the note that Spener had written his Lebenslauf and requested that it be used for the (much more elaborate) funeral sermon.
emphasis is on respecting and accepting the entirety of his spiritual experience (conversion, spiritual rebirth and the pious life that followed) in its own right. To this schema, he adds powerful arguments in favor of religious freedom and tolerance.

Spener’s text became something of a model for Pietist lives and life stories in Germany, together with Gottfried Arnold’s collection of exemplary, spiritual lives of religious dissidents in his *Unpartheiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie* (1699–1700) and Johann Henrich Reitz’s *Historie der Wiedergebohrnen* (1698–1701).³ The best example of an autobiography written according to Spener’s model is *Die Lebensbeschreibung* by Johann Wilhelm Petersen (1717). Petersen (1649–1727) was a Lutheran pastor and superintendent in the northern German city of Eutin. In 1692, he was dismissed from his office as superintendent because of his insistence on the expectation of the millennial kingdom, which had become the central feature of his preaching. Thereafter, he was forced to retreat with his family to an estate near Magdeburg, where he lived out the rest of his life strictly amongst Pietist friends. Petersen’s confession, which largely chronicles his life events, can best be described as a self-defense (*eine Selbstverteidigung*). Though he cites a moment of conversion, his focus is on justifying the unique experiences of his life as well as his accomplishments in a myriad of theological treatises. Niggl sees his autobiography as “ein Beispiel dafür, wie von einzelnen sektiererischen Vertretern des Pietismus schon in dessen Frühzeit die religiöse Konfession als eine Bekehrungsgeschichte in eine Schutz- und Propagandaschrift für die eigene Person und Lehre mehr oder minder bewußt umgewandelt werden kann” (11). *Die Lebensbeschreibung* is thus not a confession, portraying an inner spiritual struggle. Rather, Petersen’s breakthrough is his intellectual awakening to the truth

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³ Gottfried Arnold’s *Unpartheiische Kirchen- und Ketzerhistorie*, which appeared in four parts (two volumes) in Frankfurt between 1608 and 1700, was reprinted and enlarged several times until 1742 and read widely, together with the equally prolific Johann Henrich Reitz’s *Historie der Wiedergebohrnen* (with numerous enlarged editions until 1748).
of Christianity. He begins his confession with his life before being awakened and thereafter chronicles a series of events that describe his application of those truths revealed to him. Nevertheless, Petersen’s autobiography marks a significant milestone in eighteenth-century pietistic confessions. It is the first autobiography published during the author’s own lifetime and under his own name.

Johann Petersen’s wife, Johanna Eleonora Petersen, provides an exemplary female confession based on Spener’s model. Johanna’s *Kurtze Erzählung/ Wie mich die leitende Hand Gottes büßer geführet/ und was sie bei meiner Seelen gethan hat* (1689) was the first autobiography by a woman written in Germany to appear in print. When she wrote it, the first part presumably during the late 1680s and the second part in the 1710s, she may well have had intimate knowledge of Spener’s texts, given the close spiritual relationship they had in Frankfurt and kept through visits and correspondence. Yet while she outlines her path to God under his guidance, her autobiography is also quite independent from Spener’s in her reflections on a woman’s socialization. “Hers is a spiritual awakening, not a (sudden) breakthrough: from the small child’s prayer to the meeting of her spiritual counselor and conscious decision for the better part as a young adult. Her spirituality became the center of her inner, religious autobiography” (Becker-Cantarino, *Pietism* 41). That is, while the breakthrough-scheme (*Das Durchbruch-Schema*) is apparent in her confession, her spiritual history is not characterized in terms of an inner struggle for atonement (*Bußkampf*), but rather as a rise in religious awareness. Furthermore, “in place of scholarly dogmatism, rational theology and arguments with professional colleagues that stand out in her husband’s autobiography, Johanna interprets life in terms of biblical pictures with a personal, edifying piety, a piety fueled by an inner light, by faith in love as an ordering force, and by faith in the secret of the divine God-Man (*Gott-Mensch*)”
(Becker-Cantarino, Pietism 41). Thus, unlike Spener’s Lebenslauf, Johanna’s kurtze Erzählung was offered to a broader audience through publication and as the individual experience of a woman with divine inspiration.

Johanna Eleonora Petersen’s autobiography distances herself from her female predecessors, while also becoming a model in her own right for later women. Her work was arguably the first German contribution to women’s life writing, produced in Germany as a coherent, reflective experience in the literary form of autobiography. Before her there were a few chronicles, at best partial diaries or autobiographical sections written by women, such as the Abbess Caritas Pirckheimer’s account of the closing of her convent in Reformation Nuremberg (1524–28), Katharina Schütz’s autobiographical section in her tract in defense of her husband, or the one-page autobiographical preface that Maria Cunitz published in her work on astronomy, Urinia Propitia (1650). Furthermore, Johanna Eleonora Petersen served as an example for Susanna von Klettenberg and numerous other eighteenth-century women. The autobiography of the Frankfurt Pietist Klettenberg (1723–74) is known to have existed even though it was not published. Klettenberg’s influence was far-reaching in its own regard as many scholars argue that it served Goethe in writing “Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele,” the central book in his novel Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre (1795/96). Johanna Eleonora Petersen thus gave voice to Pietist women and helped prepare the way for women’s individual and collective expressions in the religious community and beyond. “While on the one hand she helped pave the way in her writings and her activist marriage, on the other hand she fostered development of inwardness, which originated from the Bible and which found its expression in the literary form of devotional literature and the edifying autobiography. This was an important step for women in finding their
own voice, in finding a room of their own, a place and goal for their lives” (Becker-Cantarino, *Pietism* 43).

Philipp Jakob Spener’s influence, however, came to a halt in the wake of the second generation Pietists led by August Hermann Francke. Francke (1663–1727) was a German Lutheran clergyman, philanthropist and Biblical scholar who become famous as a result of his work in Halle. His work utilizes Spener’s systematic thought, while also building on it. Instead of strict Pietist theology, Francke emphasized Pietist pedagogy, in which he blended devotional inwardness with an emphasis on the individual’s social obligations. Thus, in Halle, instruction in catechism preceded Bible reading. Catechistic instruction in Francke’s schools was rigorous and demanded more than rote memorization, but once pupils had mastered the catechism and the rudiments of reading, two periods a day were devoted to the reading of Scripture. These readings were necessary because Francke believed that the cultivation of inner piety required a genuine knowledge of Christ and his teachings. Francke held that the reading of Scripture transformed individuals spiritually and psychologically, filling them with the spirit of God and deepening their faith; this process is what he deemed an individual’s conversion. One of the most important elements of the latter (one’s duties) was a strong work ethic. The Pietist ethic stemmed, as Max Weber has famously argued, from the Protestant notion of work as a ‘calling’ (‘Beruf’), whose duties God had entrusted the individual to perform. The result, as Weber argues in his treatise *The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism* (1904/5), is that Pietists “combined an intense piety with business acumen in equal measure” (7). The idea of work as a duty imposed by the divine will implicitly infused labor with a moral and religious significance. Work became not merely a means of fulfilling a contractual obligation, but a spiritual duty. The importance of vocation in Pietist schooling is seen in Francke’s attempt to tailor the education of children to
their future trade or profession. In the orphanage, lower-class pupils learned to sew or spin wool. Pupils in the more exclusive primary and Latin schools learned skills useful to the future merchant or clerk, like orthography or the writing of letters and receipts. Future statesmen and officials in the elite Pädagogium studied history, geography, and modern languages, while those embarking on military careers studied geometry, mechanics, and engineering.

These various thoughts find their representation in Francke’s Lebenslauf (1695/96). His overall emphasis is a singular person’s spiritual journey, the transformation of his soul through the knowledge of God’s word and then its manifestation in outward righteousness and holiness. The organization of the Lebenslauf is thus structured around the moment of conversion. Niggl explains, “Er hat seine religiösen Erlebnisse in die Form einer Bekehrungsgeschichte mit genau benennbaren Phasen gekleidet und zum Muster eines ganzen Bekehrungssystems erhoben” (6). Certain stations stand out, in particular “Sündenerkenntnis, Sündenangst, Glaubenszweifel, Erlösungswunsch, ringendes Gebet, dann plötzliche Erleuchtung und Glaubensgewißheit, in Gestalt eines kurzen, aber heftigen Bußkampfes und überraschenden Durchbruchs auf engem Raum dramatisch konzentriert (6). Francke’s studies and career are mentioned. However, their purpose is not a defense for his theological intellect, but rather they signify respectively the predecessor and successor to the conversion moment. This new approach seeks to correct the notions of one’s faith as simply being the observances of Christian doctrine (that there are real, inner convictions), worldly living (card playing, drunkenness), and a lack of social obligation (care of one’s neighbor and the poor); instead there is a personal faith combined with communal engagement. Furthermore, central to this new spiritual reality is an emphasis on self-reflection: “Allem als Grundlage für die Praxis der pietistischen Tradition wichtig, die als Seelenprotokolle alle bei Francke vorgezeichneten Phasen durch tägliche Selbstbeobachtung herbeiführen und
nachvollziehen sollen” (6). Through these various elements, Francke’s Lebenslauf initiates a new model for the pietistic confession.

Barbara Cordula von Lautner’s Lebensläufe (1710) provides an exemplary female model based on Francke’s own Lebenslauf. Her autobiography is only commonly circulated in the edited volumes of Gottfried Arnold and Johann Heinrich Reitz. Like many of the other Lebensläufe in Reitz’s collection, von Lauter’s comes from a eulogy (Leichenpredigt). There are several other genres represented in Reitz’s collection, in addition to eulogy, such as death bed scenes, third-person narrative, poems, hymns, from among von Lauter’s story stands out as a first-person confessional narrative by a female author. The narrative is contextualized within a tale of an innocent at court. She is born in Bamberg to Catholic parents of noble birth; she is educated in a convent; and, further enhancing the dramatic development of the conversion story, she professes a sincere vocational interest in Catholicism. These plans, however, end with the death of her father, whereupon she returns home to a life at a minor provincial court. Freed from the convent, von Lauter begins to spend time with her brother and Protestant sister-in-law and eventually converts to Lutheranism. The conversion moment takes place during a sermon that she hears (unbeknownst to her) by her future husband. During this time, she reaches a moment of religious crisis, a climax of doubt and despair, thereby following Francke’s stipulations of a Bußkampf, before undergoing a soul transformation. This rebirth scene is the climax in the Lebensläufe. Thereafter von Lauter leaves the court and begins a life devoted to God.

There are other Pietist confessions that follow Francke’s model, including Adam Bernd’s Eigene Lebensbeschreibung (1738); however, these successors can all be catalogued before the middle of the century. By the 1750s, this form of autobiographical writing began to secularize. A new type of writing arose in which the development of one’s career became the main theme. The
mixing of Francke’s spiritual model with professional development is seen, for example, in Johann Georg Hamann’s *Gedanken über meinen Lebenslauf* (1758). This is the first time in which an autobiography brings together one’s history and process of conversion. It is also the first time in which the depictions of worldly (friends, travels, job) and spiritual activities (self-denunciation, prayers and reflection) are united. Hamann (1730–1788) was a German philosopher, theologian and philologist. He underwent a pietistic upbringing as a child and a fairly ambitious if unsystematic early education. He entered the University of Königsberg where he initially studied theology, but later switched to law. Throughout his life he worked within various capacities: as a private house tutor, as a member of a trading firm, as a copyist and civil servant. His autobiography reflects these professional experiences. There is only a small section devoted to his conversion. This occurs on March 31, 1758, while reading Deuteronomy 5. Hamann never uses the word ‘conversion,’ but rather states that he has had a religious experience. The process of conversion thus only emerges in a singular moment in the narrative. The self-observations on one’s inner spiritual struggle and spiritual transformation are restricted. Instead sketches of the circumstances and relations of the soul are interspersed throughout a larger meta-narrative, namely how this experience impacts him in his later professional capacities. The one respite perhaps of autobiographies like Hamann’s is that the outer events (change in jobs, travels etc.) of their lives are still explained in a causal-hierarchical arrangement, i.e., as the demonstration of God’s hand in their life.

The autobiographical writing chosen for my dissertation project are all published in the midst of this secularization process during the second half of the eighteenth century. Anna Louisa Karsch’s *Lebensbericht* (1766) is the earliest, while Friederike Helene Unger’s *Bekenntnisse* (1806) provides the last example. I argue that each of these texts exist as
transitional pieces between Francke’s traditional confession, his *Lebenslauf*, and Goethe’s secular account of life lived, *Dichtung und Wahrheit*. They give evidence to both soul-care and self-cultivation. They are concerned with piety, morality and the protestant work ethic, while at the same time they explore self-interests, individualization, and self-pleasure. Each of their writings are organized around moments of transformation (which many of them even term ‘conversions’); but these developmental changes have less to do with divine will and more to do with human agency. These mixings allow for the crafting of a spiritual self and it is for this reason that Luhmann’s concept of individualization and Foucault’s notions of spirituality, analyzed in tandem with the traditional rubric for the pietistic confession, creates a suitable, theoretical overlap for analyzing this set of autobiographical writing.

F. **Dissertation Outline:**

The body of my dissertation is organized into three chapters. Each chapter provides a gendered comparison on spiritual self-cultivation between one male-authored and one female-authored piece of autobiographical writing. Each chapter begins with an introduction of the authors, the texts as well as the particular context within which the spiritual self-cultivation is practiced. The rest of each chapter is comprised of two sections, comparing and contrasting the various spiritual practices mobilized by the male and female authors respectively. In doing so, it highlights the points of intersection between the recurring practices of pietistic confession and secular accounts of life lived. Each chapter then concludes with a combined analysis of both texts. The conclusion summarizes the findings, providing a particular focus on the gendered differences between the two texts.
Chapter One considers how two secularizing pietistic autobiographies – Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling’s *Lebensgeschichte* (1777–1804) and the *Lebensbericht von Anna Louisa Karsch* (1761/62) – incorporate piety into their distinctly secular cultivation of the self thereby expanding the notion of ‘calling’ (‘Beruf’). The first section highlights how Jung-Stilling’s spiritual development and his career are intricately linked in the *Lebensgeschichte*. It argues that within his overall transformation there is a complex interweaving of self-cultivation, medical thought and spirituality. He utilizes the spiritual practices that he learns from his pietistic education, including introspective reading, but applies them within the medium of scientific manuscripts and journals in order to transform into a doctor. The second section analyzes Karsch’s development of her intellectual capacities as a poet. She also treats her readings of poetry as a spiritual exercise that she must first learn from and then apply to her self in order to transform into a poet. Furthermore, this section argues that her linking of professional development with spirituality not only enables the autopoietic crafting of her self, but it also fosters the justification needed for this pursuit as a woman. The second half of the *Lebensbericht* then provides various examples of her poetic production. Finally, both Jung-Stilling and Karsch find aesthetic arrangement for their pious-professional selves within public services, the former as a national doctor and the latter as a national poet. Neither career conforms to the traditional, pietistic notion of work stipulated by the founding father of Pietism, Spener, in which service was simply understood as working honestly and without ambition within one’s pre-determined profession. Their ‘callings’ are individual at their core and they elevate self-interests over the communal. Nevertheless, Jung-Stilling and Karsch legitimate their professionalization by creating a new definition of service and a correlating new spiritual aesthetics.
Chapter Two considers two fictional autobiographies – Karl Philip Moritz’s *Anton Reiser* (1785) and Angelika Rosa’s *Lebensschicksale einer deutschen Frau im 18. Jahrhundert in eigenhändigen Briefen* (1784/85) – in which pietistic and secular concepts of ‘calling’ collide. The first section argues that, in the crafting of his self, Anton Reiser experiences both moments of proximity and distance to the religious conception of ‘calling.’ During three instances of his life – in his training, first, as a tradesman, second, as a preacher, and finally, as an actor – there are moments when Reiser understands himself as a religious workman, whose efforts and labors are for God alone. This spiritual concern, however, only arises in moments where his self-cultivation is lacking, and focusing on the soul allows for the progression of the self. As he continues to make his way through the world, his distances to spiritual concerns become more frequent and this plays a distinct role in the breakdown of his self-cultivation. Angelika Rosa, in her *Lebensschicksale* (1784/85), has a different but equally complex relationship to the notion of ‘calling.’ Her development is guided through two models (*Vorbilder*): the first (a Turkish woman) exemplifies the secular, intellectual woman in the public sphere, while the second (women in her hometown) endorses the religious, domestic woman. These two models create a link between religious and cultural norms; the former encourages Rosa to work for her self by propagating a distinctly anti-pietistic developmental model, while the latter bases the notion of working for God on biblical principles. Furthermore, the two models are construed as incompatible. Rosa struggles back and forth between the two, exploring both forms of development, until she eventually gives in to the latter. The breakdown between soul-care and self-cultivation in these two writings is specifically middle-class. The conclusion highlights how both Reiser’s and Rosa’s life narratives reflect the bourgeois’ introduction to various theoretical developmental models and the instability of their exploration with them.
Chapter Three examines the spiritual self-cultivation for two beautiful souls in Johann Wolfgang on Goethe’s “Die Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele” and Friederike Helene Unger’s *Die Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele von ihr selbst geschrieben*. It argues that Goethe’s beautiful soul and Mirabella respectively make the pursuit of self their ‘calling’ and term this morality. That is to say, both women seek to separate, or remove, themselves from the institutionalized definitions of morality, specifically those given by the church, and create instead their own personal and subjective form of morality manifested through their own unique thinking. This they accomplish through the books they read, through the various definitions and depictions of morality that they collect from them, and the ways in which they apply these concepts to their own selves. The legitimation of their cultivated moral selves is then determined by their accompanying aesthetic arrangements. The self-cultivation of these two beautiful souls reveals a distinct search for authenticity. Though they reject the traditional pietistic model of moral development, they are also not in favor of moral performance alone. Rather, Goethe’s beautiful soul and Mirabella seek to experience moral transformation that is both quantifiable and reproducible. Their point of differences are manifested in substantive versus imagined moral cultivation, the influence of men and masculine models of morality versus the induction of innovative and female counter-models and the extent to which their moral selves can be tested and proved within the greater community.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the findings of the entire dissertation project. It highlights identifiable trends between all six autobiographical writings, provides a gendered comparison of these trends and concludes with an analysis thereof. These trends, I argue, reveal that the beginnings of the self are not wholly separate and original from its predecessor (the soul). It still requires a model to base both its conception and development from (as well as
against), and the pietistic model provides that structure. This interdependency raises questions of the self’s originality as well as its sustainability outside of a religious context.
II. CHAPTER ONE:

THE PIOUS PROFESSIONAL: THE BEGINNINGS OF THE SPIRITUAL SELF IN THE

LEBENSBERICHT VON ANNA LOUISA KARSCH (1761/62) AND JOHANN HEINRICH

JUNG-STILLING’S LEBENSGESCHICHTE (1777–1804)

From the time of Martin Luther (1483–1546) to the middle decades of the eighteenth century, the word *Beruf* was mainly a theological term that was used for the personal task and duty of a Christian (Smith, “Religion” 153). It dealt primarily with the Christian’s process of salvation. “Calling in this sense was the primary locus of the ‘cross’ – i.e., the sufferings and trials – that prepared for the state of grace” (La Vopa 143). Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), the father of Pietism, illuminates this concept in his major treatise, *Pia Desideria* (1675). He describes how Christians are merely receptors of justification and sanctification; the former being God’s work for a person and the other God’s work in a person. The person being converted as a result is wholly passive and the work is all God’s. This general calling that Luther first envisions and Spener elaborates upon describes how a Christian is brought into connection with the spiritual realm and equipped to live a life wholly devoted to God in heart, mind and soul. In *Pia Desideria*, Spener writes, “unser ganzes Christentum besteht in dem inneren oder neuen Menschen, dessen Seele der Glaube und seine Wirkungen die Früchte des Lebens sind” (36). In regard to these “Früchte des Lebens,” with the reception of grace, ‘calling’ “became the medium through which the Christian expressed the ‘love of neighbor’ to which faith impelled him and, in so doing, helped realize God’s design” (La Vopa 142–43). In this way, ‘calling’ was clearly distinguished from the Latin *Professio*. It was not understood in terms of an office or occupation. Rather, it was linked to a Christian’s soul and by extension his or her character.
During the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the word *Beruf* gradually evolved. This was largely due to August Hermann Francke and his involvement in Halle Pietism. Francke’s mission was the “universal improvement of all estates” (La Vopa 143). “In the service of that mission, the doctrine of calling, though remaining solidly Lutheran, incorporated a work ethic that bore close resemblance to the Puritan ideal of ‘continuous labor in the calling’ and ‘the self-affirming activity of the Godly’ and promised a similar ‘utopia of men without leisure’” (La Vopa 143). Max Weber highlights this phenomenon in his work, *The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism* (1905). He argues that Pietists began to combine intense piety with business acumen in equal measure (*Capitalism* 7). Indeed, within certain pietistic spheres, “a virtuoso capitalist commercial sense coincided with intense forms of piety, which permeated and regulated the whole of life” (*Capitalism* 6). For Francke, this meant keeping a tight, strenuous daily schedule that exhibited a virtual mania toward hard work. His ‘calling’ was no longer limited to duty in the traditional sense. Rather, “it required an intensely self-disciplined, never-waste-a-minute, almost feverish activity in a lifelong occupation or office, maximizing use of time and effort in the service of ‘the common welfare’” (La Vopa 143). This activism became a new process of spiritual regeneration: a Christian’s hard work became the expression of true love for his or her neighbor, inspired and nourished by faith, and a sign that he or she had entered the state of grace. In other words, the term *Beruf* took on the meaning of ‘profession.’ The humanistic concept of natural talent, the traditional Lutheran view of ‘calling,’ the pietist ideal of conversion and the new secular ethic of vocation all fused together during this time.

This newly fused conception of ‘calling’ finds its representation in two expansions of pietistic autobiographies – Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling’s *Lebensgeschichte* (1777–1804) and
the *Lebensbericht von Anna Louisa Karsch* (1761/62). This chapter argues that both Jung-Stilling and Karsch incorporate piety into their processes of self-cultivation as a new form of ‘calling’ or spiritual duty; the former seeks to fashion his self into a pious, medical doctor (I) and the latter into a pious poet (II). Neither Jung-Stilling nor Karsch are driven by materialistic gain. Their endeavors are secular in so far as they seek out professions based on personal self-interests, but, at the same time, their purposes are still to serve others and thus please God. Though traditional Pietists, such as Spener, would have seen their processes of self-cultivation as worldly, Jung-Stilling and Karsch attempt to show how their actions are both spiritually delineated and manifested thereby creating a new spiritual aesthetics for the term ‘calling’ and justifying it through their own life accounts. Karsch experiences greater challenges in this endeavor than Jung-Stilling. Her ability to fashion her own sense of calling reflects a continuous engagement with and appeasement of societal, in particular gender, norms. The conclusion (III) will consider the significance of this new spiritual aesthetics of ‘calling.’

A. **Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling’s *Lebensgeschichte* (1777–1804)**

Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling’s fictional autobiography, *Lebensgeschichte* (1777–1804), is one of the most well-known pietistic autobiographies of the eighteenth century. This lengthy book, written in seven volumes, is also arguably one of the most extensive conversion narratives in prose form: Volumes I and II (*Heinrich Stillings Jugend* and *Heinrich Stillings Jünglingsjahre*) chart his spiritual education as a child, Volume III (*Heinrich Stillings Wanderschaft*) highlights the moment of his conversion, Volume IV–VI (*Heinrich Stillings*  

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4 Henceforth cited as the *Lebensbericht*.  

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häusliches Leben, Heinrich Stillings Lehrjahre, and Rückblick auf Stillings bisherige Lebensgeschichte) chronicles his life as an adult believer while working in various capacities to serve God and man, and, finally, Volume VII (Heinrich Stillings Alter) charts his theological views. Jung-Stilling bases his conversion narrative on the models of his predecessors, in particular on August Hermann Francke’s Lebenslauf (1690/91),\(^5\) while also turning it into a major literary production.

However, Jung-Stilling’s Lebensgeschichte is not as neatly demarcated – religiously-speaking – as it sounds. In many ways, this autobiographical writing is just as much a story of his search for a professional calling as it is his development into a pious adult. In a comparable paradigm to his conversion narrative, Jung-Stilling cycles through a number of occupations (similar to the experience of an inner, spiritual struggle [Bußkampf]) before discovering his ‘calling,’ i.e., his interest in medicine (a climax which occurs in tandem to the moment of conversion). The fact that Jung-Stilling’s conversion is conflated with the beginning of his medical career leaves the question of his exact transformation open. This mixing is the focus of this section. It seeks to highlight how Jung-Stilling’s spiritual development and his career are intricately linked in the Lebensgeschichte and it gives particular focus to how his care of the soul is situated within a growing process of self-cultivation. It argues specifically that within his overall transformation there is a complex interweaving of self-cultivation, medical thought and spirituality. The following will consider how Jung-Stilling accomplishes this blending. It will then conclude with a consideration on how this conflated form of development casts a new light on his conversion narrative.

\(^5\) For a further comparison between Jung-Stilling’s conversion model and his predecessors, see Kontje, “Private Life” 19–20 and Hirzel, “Lebensgeschichte” 29; for a general discussion on the pietistic conversion model, see Niggl, Geschichte 94 and “Säkularisation” 369.
The first two volumes of the *Lebensgeschichte* provide a traditional frame. Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling is born into inclusion. His identity from birth is pre-determined and pre-arranged by his family: he is a Pietist by confession, his profession is the family trade (tailoring), and his education is limited to the Bible and the Heidelberg catechism. His education does not inform his professional work. Rather, it is only what is necessary for the care of his soul. Furthermore, his grandfather, Eberhard Stilling, stipulates the family’s way of life: directly at the onset of the novel, he expresses the wish that his children (and his children’s children) “sollten nur auf Fleiß und Frömmigkeit sehen” (8). Herein lies the parameters of Jung-Stilling’s life. His childhood and adolescence represent a typical, pre-modern form of identity in which he is bound by a stratified affiliation to the surrounding social structures. That is, he is bound by a pre-defined social role based on his age, gender, and social status. Jung-Stilling’s interests (at least so he is taught) are not to be different from his family, but rather must reflect the family interests and, since their main concern is serving God through their trade, the trajectory of Jung-Stilling’s development appears to be limited to that of a pious tailor.

However, just as soon as Jung-Stilling establishes himself within this inclusive form of identity, he immediately deconstructs it; the second volume already begins to show his approach. In the first, Jung-Stilling takes great pain to highlight his physical inability to conduct the same work as his father and grandfather. The text states, “Er war zwar ordentlich groß und stark, aber von Jugend auf nicht dazu gewöhnt, und er hatte kein Glied an sich, das zu dergleichen Geschäften gemacht war . . . Er meinte oft vor Müdigkeit und Schmerzen niederzusinken” (91). In this statement, Jung-Stilling crafts his first critique of inclusive identity. People should not be

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forced into a trade just because their family is engaged in it because, like himself, some may not be constitutionally capable for the work. Second, he explicitly states his desires to obtain a better education. This desire reflects his modern inclination, for it was the educational systems during this time (among other institutions) that were acting as vehicles for men and women to construct and manage their own individuality.\(^7\) He eventually tells his father, “Vater! Meine ganze Seele ist auf die Bücher gerichtet, ich kann meine Neigung nicht bändigen” (92). His inclination toward books not only points to his real interest (in direct contrast to tailoring), but it also serves as a means to escape manual labor. In fact, by the end of *Heinrich Stillings Jünglingsjahre*, Jung-Stilling is resolved to break his familial ties and create a new identity for himself: “Er sehnte sich derowegen von seinem Vater ab, und an einen andern Ort zu kommen” (92). Thus, instead of upholding his stratified affiliations within society, he establishes his discontents with it, showing how it is both restrictive and unenjoyable.

However, Jung-Stilling’s move toward individualization, and with it the opportunity for self-cultivation, is not marked by a complete process of secularization. Rather, the narrative describes the beginning of his break as a divine intervention. One morning, as he is lying in bed, he is conflicted in his circumstances, wrestling with how dreadful the family labor is, how little money he is earning, and how terrible his clothes are. This conflict resembles a Bußkampf in a typical pietistic confession. But, instead of wrestling back and forth between moral and immoral actions, Jung-Stilling’s dilemma centers upon whether he should stay or leave his family. The narrative states, “Er wurde halb rasend, fuhr aus dem Bett, und rief: ‘Allmächtiger Gott! Was soll ich denn machen?’” (144). This moment provides an interesting contrast – as he seeks to sever ties with his earthly father, Jung-Stilling draws closer to his spiritual one; the familial identity is rejected.

\(^7\) For more on the sociological models of the self, see Luhman, “Individuum” 155–58.
but the religious one is made ever stronger. Immediately, he gets a response: “In dem Augenblick war es ihm, als wenn ihm in die Seele gesprochen wurde: ‘Geh aus deinem Vaterland, von deiner Freundschaft, und aus deines Vaters Haus, in ein Land das ich dir zeigen will!’” (144). This divine voice provides the necessary justification: it is not just that Jung-Stilling wants to leave, but that God is telling him to. The scene constructs a literal calling in which God draws him out of his current profession and leads him into another one. Furthermore, God promises to be with him, guide him and start something new in and through him. This alone provides the impetus for Jung-Stilling to go: “Er fühlte sich tief beruhiget, und er beschloß sofort, in die Fremde zu gehen” (144). The tranquility that he feels in this moment shows that his struggle has been resolved.

The third volume, Heinrich Stillings Wanderschaft, marks the climactic moment. Jung-Stilling leaves home and his departure prompts his conversion. The passage begins, “Etwa mitten im Julius, ging er an einem Sonntagnachmittag durch eine Gasse der Stadt Schauberg . . . Von ohngefähr blickte er in die Höhe und sah eine lichte Wolke über seinem Haupte hinziehen; mit diesem Augenblick durchdrung eine unbekannte Kraft seine Seele, ihm wurde so innig wohl, er zitterte am ganzen Leibe, und konnte sich kaum enthalten, daß er nicht darniedersunk” (157). This description alludes to the most prominent biblical conversion: the transformation of Saul to Paul on the Damascus Road. The divine enters the scene as “an unknown power,” like a bright light in the sky, it penetrates into the soul and initiates an internal transformation. The narrative continues: “Von dem Augenblick an fühlte er eine unüberwindliche Neigung, ganz für die Ehre Gottes, und das Wohl seiner Mitmenschen zu leben und zu sterben” (157). This event is quite similar to that which happened to Paul: after his encounter with Christ, he stops persecuting

8 See Acts 9.
Christians and instead dedicates his life to serving God. But the impetus for Paul’s change is monumentally different from Jung-Stilling’s. Paul’s transformation is predicated on an immediate belief in the existence of Jesus Christ; a transformation for which acknowledgement of sin and repentance was required. For Jung-Stilling, the emphasis is simply on the incorporation of piety. The soul is not refined; it is expanded. Jung-Stilling has just begun his search for his own identity (including personal self-interests and an individualized profession) and the divine stamp for this venture is that, no matter the path, he will remain inclined to serve God and others.

Things begin to move rapidly after this scene. In the same month, Jung-Stilling’s specific ‘calling’ is revealed to him. He has found temporary work and lodging with a man named Mr. Spanier and, “an einem Nachmittag im Julius” (188) (a phrase which picks up on the language of his conversion moment), this man abruptly approaches him and tells him that he should study medicine: “Herr Spanier [spazierte] in der Stuben auf und ab, wie er zu tun pflegte, wenn er eine wichtige Sache überlegte . . . ‘Hört Präzeptor!’ fing endlich Spanier an: ‘mir fällt da auf einmal ein, was Ihr tun sollt, Ihr müßt Medizin studieren’” (188). The revelation of profession is not described as some sort of social digression or threat, but rather it is presented by a divine messenger. For as soon as Jung-Stilling hears these words, he submits to them. He tells Mr.

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9 Hans R. Günther provides an extensive comparison of Jung-Stilling’s conversion with August Hermann Francke’s Lebenslauf and Johann Heinrich Reitz’s Historie der Wiedergebohrnen (49–51). In his analysis of this scene, Günther also highlights Jung-Stilling’s omission of sin: “Es wird nun unsere Aufgabe sein, zu untersuchen, ob Stilling tatsächlich und wirklich eine derartige Verleugnung und Opferung seines eigenen, niederen Selbst, wie er beschreibt, vollbracht hat, ode rob er nur geglaubt haben sollte, sein eigenes sündiges Ich aufgegeben zu haben. Hat er sein niederes Selbst in der tatsächlichen Lebens realität überwunden, oder hat er sich nur im Gedanken von seinem verderbten Ich befreit und erlöst geglaubt?” (51).

10 For a historical background to this character, see Merk, Bildungsfehler 12–13.

11 The exact reason for Mr. Spanier’s recommendation of medicine, however, is never fully explained. Martin Völkel speculates, “Zu vermuten ist, daß er den begabten jungen Mann längerfristig an sein Haus binden wollte. Möglich ist, daß [Spanier] eine Eheschließung mit seiner ältesten Tochter Anna Margharetha nicht ungern gesehen
Spanier, “O Herr Spanier! Was soll ich sagen, was soll ich denken? Das ist’s, wozu ich bestimmt bin. Ja, ich fühl in meiner Seelen, das ich so lange gesucht, und nicht habe finden können!” (188). Jung-Stilling’s phrasing reveals a unique slippage: he states that he feels this confirmation in his soul and, in this way, the desires of the self (from leaving home to determining his own profession) are couched in spiritual terms. Jung-Stilling will study medicine, craft his self as a doctor and thereafter begin an accompanying practice. But this is all done on account of God and in obedience to him.\textsuperscript{12} The scene concludes with him stating, “Gelobt sei der barmherzige Gott, daß er mir doch endlich seinen Willen offenbaret hat, nun will ich auch getrost seinem Wink folgen” (188).

Jung-Stilling is then immediately provided with a model and mentor. In the very same village there lives a Catholic priest and oculist named Molitor. He is described as a “Vicarius” (190), but “seine meiste Beschäftigung bestund in chemischen Arbeiten und Augenkuren, worinnen er noch immer der berühmteste Mann, in der ganzen Gegend, war” (190–91). This man conducts both spiritual and physical work. He cares for people’s eyes as well as their souls. Furthermore, the details of his occupation, i.e., the entirety of his medical knowledge, has been written in a manuscript: “Er [habe] alle seine Geheimnisse für die Augen ganz getreu und umständlich, ihren Gebrauch und Zubereitung sowohl, als auch die Erklärung der vornehmsten Augenkrankheiten, nebst ihrer Heilmethode aufgesetzt” (191). Now he wants to commit this knowledge to a worthy

\textsuperscript{12} Martin Völkel even goes so far to argue that in this moment the paths of individual strivings and divine providence are combined: “Das Vertrauen in die göttliche Vorsehung muß erst recht nicht das eigene Handeln ersetzen, erfordert wohl aber seine strikte Unterordnung. Denn die Gefahr des Konfliktes zwischen dem eigenen Bestreben nach Lebensgestaltung und dem Weg, den ihn die ‘Vorsehung führen will’, ist natürlich gegenwärzig und wird mehrfach da offenbar, wo Stilling wieder einmal der Vorsehung ‘vorausgeeilt’ ist, überall also, wo er mit seinen eigenen Plänen gescheitert ist und vermeintliche Schritte ‘zurückgehen’ muß” (41).
recipient for which Jung-Stilling is chosen. The narrative describes how an ensuing spiritual relationship is formed between Molitor and Jung-Stilling. The passing on of the manuscript is likened to a father gifting his son with wisdom that is to be treasured, studied and acted out. The son (Jung-Stilling) in return must only abide by one rule: he must care for the poor without charge (“Doch mit dem Beding, daß er ein Handgelübde tun müßte, jederzeit arme Notleidende umsonst damit zu bedienen” [191]). This charge is intentional, reiterating Jung-Stilling’s promise during his conversion moment to serve others.

Thereafter Jung-Stilling begins his spiritual self-cultivation. Molitor gives him the manuscript as well as several additional medical books from his library. However, Jung-Stilling is not to keep these writings. He is to transcribe them for himself and then return the originals. Molitor explains the reason for this approach: “Der Herr! Der Heilige! Der Überallgegenwärtige! Bewirke Sie durch Seinen Heiligen Geist: zum besten Menschen, zum besten Christen, und zum besten Arzt!” (192). Jung-Stilling is not supposed to simply accumulate a list of thoughts from the manuscript. Rather, his medical knowledge is spiritual knowledge – he must memorize it, apply it to himself and ultimately be transformed by it. In this sense, he should approach the manuscript like the Pietist who engages in introspective readings of the Bible (or, as it pertains to Molitor, like a Catholic in monastic contemplation) and, in similar fashion, his internalization of this knowledge will spiritualize specifically because it is facilitated and guided “by the Holy Spirit.” This becomes his real transformation (his ‘conversion’). He will change from having an identity of inclusion to exclusion, from a person to an individual and, most significantly, from unskilled to “the best of doctors” as a result of his development in medical thought.

This scientific transformation then initiates a real medical practice. The narrative continues, “Sobald er zu Hause war, fing er an die Molitorische Medikamente zu bereiten” (193). There is
no mention of books (not even of Jung-Stilling’s transcription of the books). Implicitly, he is acting purely based on the knowledge he has internalized. But to provide even further proof of his capabilities, the narrative incorporates a story of the application of his cures: “Nun hatte Herr Spanier einen Knecht, dessen Knabe von zwölf Jahren seit langer Zeit sehr wehe Augen gehabt hatte; an diesem machte Stilling seinen ersten Versuch, und der geriet vortrefflich, so daß der Knabe in kurzer Zeit heil wurde; daher kam er bald in eine ordentliche Praxis, so daß er viel zu tun hatte” (193). In following his own promise to God as well as to Molitor, Jung-Stilling does not charge him for the service rendered. The result is a twofold blessing: he is given success in his operation and this operation turns into a regular practice and, as such, Jung-Stilling enters into a legitimate career. Furthermore, he is given the promise of a continued practice: “Gegen den Herbst schon, hatte sich das Gerücht von seinen Kuren vier Stunden umher, bis nach Schönenthal, verbreitet” (193). In this way, Jung-Stilling’s medical profession becomes the aesthetic arrangement for the transformation he experienced. Just like in a traditional, pietistic confession, in which the life of a believer after his or her conversion is marked by actions of faith, so here too Jung-Stilling’s transformation into a doctor is followed by (or proven by) his medical capabilities.

Jung-Stilling’s self-cultivation, however, is not yet finished. Six years later (which within the narrative encompasses the following two paragraphs alone), Mr. Spanier reenters the scene to further the process. The text states, “Herr Spanier schlug ihm vor: er sollte noch einige Jahre bei ihm bleiben, und so vor sich studieren, alsdann wolle er ihm ein paar hundert Reichstaler geben, damit könne er nach einer Universität reisen, sich examinieren und promovieren lassen” (194). It is interesting that, even though studying medicine is described earlier as Jung-Stilling’s “hidden desire,” he himself approaches this self-interest with great passivity. It is only after an outside
party provides both idea and means that he initiates any sort of action. No doubt this approach is intentional: Jung-Stilling’s desires are ambitious (like a rise fairy tale, he starts out as a poor tailor’s son and then seeks to go the university to become a legitimate doctor), yet he still attempts to pacify the pietistic community who demands that service to God be done without ambition or selfish gain. But after this confrontation, Jung-Stilling’s ambition still shines through; the text states, “Dieser Plan gefiel Stilling ganz . . . Sein Zweck war, die Medizin auf einer Universität aus dem Grunde zu studieren” (194). He recognizes that his work as a folk practitioner is not enough. His degree as a doctor must be supported by an even greater extent of knowledge. Mr. Spanier simply acts again as divine messenger and the weight of his words makes Jung-Stilling’s choice of going to the university less an issue of interest and more of obedience.

Thereafter, Jung-Stilling matriculates at the University of Straßburg. There he inquires about lectures and attends as many as possible. His particular studies (those which are described as “seine Hauptstücke” [207]) are “die Naturlehre, die Scheidekunst und die Zergliederung” (207). This time is marked as the pinnacle of his self-interests and his relishing in and fulfillment of them. The narrative describes how he was “jetzt in seinem Element” and how he “verschlang alles, was er hörte” (209). However, there is a marked difference between his current studies and his study of Molitor’s manuscript. Here he does not take notes: “[Er] schrieb weder Collegia noch sonst etwas ab sondern trug alles zusammen in allgemeine Begriffe über” (209). This is a direct progression. Jung-Stilling had only transcribed Molitor’s manuscript and memorized it verbatim. In doing so, he took on Molitor’s thoughts and imitated the vicar-oculist in his actions.

13 Martin Vökel interprets this divide in similar fashion. He describes it as “der beständige Konflikt zwischen dem Versuch beruflicher Bescheidung und “persönlicher Befriedigung im Beruf”” (61).
But now he has a different approach. Instead of memorizing the scientific knowledge presented to him *en masse*, he transposes them into his own “general ideas.” He is not just becoming like his professors in thought and action. Rather, he is crafting his own professional self. In doing so a twofold transformation takes place. First, as Gerhard Berneaud-Kötz notes, Jung-Stilling can no longer be described as belonging to the cohort of “Heilpersonen, Wunderärzten […] Kräuterheilern etc.” (21), but rather, based on his increasing knowledge of anatomy and pathology, he has become a legitimate physician and surgeon. Second, Jung-Stilling is beginning to think for himself as an individualized medical practitioner. This was not an easy task and certainly not one that his fellow colleagues were engaging in. The paragraph concludes by highlighting the uniqueness of this phenomenon: “Selig ist der Mann, der diese Methode wohl zu üben weiß! Aber es ist nicht einem jeden gegeben” (209).

To this, a practical education is added. Jung-Stilling conducts a year-long clinical experience under the professorship of a Dr. Ehrmann. Together, they make personal studies of the sick. The narrative continues, “Auch besuchte er schon diesen Winter mit Herrn Professor Ehrmann die Kranken im Hospital. Er bemerkte da die Krankheiten, und auf der Anatomie ihre Ursachen” (213). This action also harkens back to Jung-Stilling’s time with Molitor, for he is described here as studying the manuscript and learning the various eye disorders and their causes. But while the first experience is done solely within the confines of a book, this second experience is conducted within a hospital and based off of real patients. This experience serves as both proof and legitimation of his knowledge.\(^{14}\) The source of Molitor’s knowledge is never

\(^{14}\) Gerhard Berneaud-Kötz takes a different approach. He considers how Jung-Stilling’s personal observations are a strictly modern activity as it relates to his separation and organization of the various diseases: “Krankheiten wurden noch Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts nach bestimmten Äußerungen als ‘Ganzheiten’ bewertet und vor allem mit den unterschiedlichen Theorien belegt. Die damalige medizinische Wissenschaft hatte das Bestreben, Krankheiten zu einem System zu gliedern, wie es Botaniker und Zoologen mit Pflanzen und Tieren taten. Auch wurde versucht, die aufstrebenden Naturwissenschaften, insbesondere die Chemie und Physik, in neue Lehrgebäude einzubeziehen.
given and this anonymity leaves his information open to critique. In fact, one of Jung-Stilling’s friends, a Mr. Troost, challenges the manuscript, saying that it is filled with “Sächelchen, Geheimnissen und Salbereien” (207). By contrast, Jung-Stilling charts the source of his knowledge, reassuring both himself and his readers that he is in no way a quack doctor. Furthermore, his experience in the hospital allows for his knowledge to be more thorough: “Mit einem Wort: er wendete in allen Disziplinen der Arzeneiwissenschaft alles mögliche an, um Gründlichkeit zu erlangen” (207). His practical experience is thus a critical element for his overall individualization.

Furthermore, having established his own unique mode of thought, Jung-Stilling seeks to provide his individualization with a correlating aesthetic arrangement. To this end, the fifth volume of the Lebensgeschichte is dedicated to his ‘new’ life, in which he travels throughout Germany and even the greater parts of Europe, attending to peoples’ various eye diseases. This profession becomes his pious service to God and the following story of his first surgery illuminates how his piety is expressed. There is a young woman in his town who wants her cataracts removed. She tells him, “Mein Mann ist ein Taglöchner, sonst half ich uns mit Spinnen ernähren, nun kann ich das nicht mehr, und mein Mann ist recht fleißig, aber er kann’s doch allein nicht zwingen” (243). Jung-Stilling happily removes the cataracts and the woman is healed. Furthermore, in following Molitor’s charge, he does not require any payment from her. His service to her is thus not only a physical healing, but also a provision of economic and financial relief. But even more so, this physical healing is linked to spiritual care as well. The woman sees a divine hand at work within this healing process. She tells Jung-Stilling before the

Auch die therapeutischen Konzepte folgten solchen Theorien und Systemen. Diesen war Jung-Stilling aufgrund seiner akademischen Ausbildung gleichfalls verhaftet, und er stellte Behandlungsschemata auf, so wie er es von seinen klinischen Lehrern übernommen hatte (27–28).
surgery, “vielleicht segnet Sie unser Herrgott, daß es gerät” (243) and in fact, when her sight is restored, so too is her faith. Jung-Stilling’s engagement with the world as a doctor thus initiates a new expression of piety. He himself is not devoted to God (at least not in the traditional sense), yet his medical services instills devotion in others. Gerhard Merk, for example, states that Jung-Stilling’s actions foster, “Glaube und Hoffnung auf das Reich des Friedens, das Jesus Christus errichtet und für alle Menschen aufbewahrt hat” (9). This first surgery provides the model for his lifelong service and, as the rest of the fifth and sixth volumes unfold, Jung-Stilling continues to heal over two thousand people through his ophthalmic remedies and cataract surgery.

Jung-Stilling concludes his Lebensgeschichte, stating that though he is pious (i.e., he has become a pious professional), he is no longer a Pietist. In fact, he argues that he has become more pious than his fellow Pietists. He labels the Pietists as “Maulchristentum” who have no “gute Handlungen” to support their words (230). In contrast, he describes himself as follows: “Er habe lange genug von Pflichten geschwätzt, nun wollte er schweigen und sie ausüben” (291). Jung-Stilling critiques his former community. He rejects a religious identity constructed through words alone and instead argues that religious actions, e.g., his practical service to God and man, is the true example of piety. Furthermore, Jung-Stilling’s actions now define and prove the state of his soul. In doing so, he introduces a new component to his life narrative: the integral relationship between the soul and the self. His spirituality is inseparable from his personal self-

15 Gerhard Berneaud-Kötz, in contrast, argues that Jung-Stilling’s actions perfectly represent a pietistic approach to medicine. He states, “Hier bahnen sich bereits Verbindungen zwischen Medizin und Pietismus an. Charakteristisch für pietistische Medizin ist die enge Verknüpfung zwischen Leib- und Seelsorge. Sie gründet sich auf die Schrift (21): Matt. 10:8 “Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay.”

16 Martin Völkel also highlights how the pietistic community in turn critiqued Jung-Stilling: “Ob nun gleich [Stilling] noch in vielen Stücken [mit den Pietisten] harmonierte, so hatte er doch aus vieler Erfahrung und auch aus richtigen Begriffen vernünftiger denken und handeln gelernt; er band sich nicht ganz an ihre Gesinnungen, sondern lebte seiner freien Übersetzung gemäß; das hielten nun jene nicht für gut, sie sahen ihn als einen Mann an, der auf beiden Schultern trägt, weder kalt noch warm ist, den man also ausspeien muß” (86).
interests in medicine, and it is his individualization (as opposed to his faith) that becomes the foundation for his pious service to God.\textsuperscript{17} The result is the first representative of a secularized, pietistic way of life. Jung-Stilling has remained religious in behavior, but has become secular in thought. His actions allow for a continued connection to spirituality, while his knowledge creates the gap between him and Pietists of the old school such as Spener, Francke, and Spangenberg.

This conflated scheme of development requires a (re)interpretaton of the conversion scheme within the \textit{Lebensgeschichte}. It still follows the traditional, pietistic model: Jung-Stilling chronicles his trajectory from an undesirable to a desirable state of being, with a \textit{Bußkampf}, a moment of conversion and a gradual progression of refinement in-between. However, the focus within this scheme vastly differs from those written by earlier Pietists. While Francke’s \textit{Lebenslauf}, for example, provides a dramatic account of transforming from a lukewarm Christian to breaking through to an assurance of grace and new life, Jung-Stilling’s \textit{Lebensgeschichte} is merely a conversion to the pious self. It is his narrative of transforming from an unskilled peasant to a medical professional. Nevertheless, Jung-Stilling is adamant that his transformations are divinely orchestrated and guided and, in describing his secularization process in a spiritual light, he attempts to sanctify it.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Otto W. Hahn instead positions Jung-Stilling between religion in general and the enlightenment. He argues, “Er war nun kein Pietist mehr; aber er war kein Rationalist” (32).

\textsuperscript{18} For more on Jung-Stilling’s religious interpretation of his secularizing life, see Benrath, “Ein Überblick” 11 and Hirzel, “Lebensgeschichte” 30.
B. The Lebensbericht von Anna Louisa Karsch, In vier Briefen an Sulzer (1761/62)

If the pursuit and indeed expansion of ‘calling’ was difficult for men in the eighteenth century, it was all the more so for women. Not only did women have to overcome the moral hurdle (i.e., the ethical integrity of vocation), they also had to navigate traditional gender norms. The model of separate-spheres gender economy was pervasive and, even amidst the rise of the bourgeois class, women were still relegated to the private (domestic) sphere and to rigid codes of propriety. Frequently, women’s professionalization was considered an affront to their roles as mother and wife. They were not generally admitted to enroll at universities,¹⁹ and even if they did obtain an unusually high degree of education (thereby achieving the coveted status of “gelehrt”), even fewer were able to claim scholarly activity as their main field or occupation. If women were to successfully cultivate their self according to personal interests and officially enter into the public realm as a part of a new notion of ‘calling,’ they had to find alternative paths, which nonetheless still appeased national, religious and social parameters. It is not surprising then that against these odds very few were able to achieve the status of a female professional.

This section considers how Anna Louisa Karsch, despite the obstacles she faced, was able to become a national poet. In the Lebensbericht von Anna Louisa Karsch: In vier Briefen an Sulzer (1761/62), Anna Louisa Karsch outlines her self-cultivation. Her autobiography, written in four letters between Fall 1761 (Letters I–III) and September 1762 (Letter IV), can be organized into two parts: in the first (Letters I–II), she develops her intellectual capacities as a poet and, in the second (Letters III–IV), she provides various examples of her poetic production. This section

¹⁹ There were only two doctorates awarded to German women during the entire century: Dorothea Leporin received her M.D. at the University of Halle in 1755 and Dorothea Schlözer, her Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Göttingen in 1787. Both were able to achieve professional status, but were severely criticized by their contemporaries for this transgression into the masculine realm.
argues that unique to Karsch’s process of self-cultivation is her incorporation of the soul. Not only does she craft her self via spiritual practices, but she also links her subsequent behavior to a specific pietistic concern: piety. This linking of professional development with spirituality not only enables the autopoietic crafting of her self, but it also fosters the legitimate justification needed for this pursuit of her ‘calling.’

The frame of the Lebensbericht illuminates the unique model from which Karsch bases her development. It begins with her childhood in a poor, pietistic household. Her uncle is concerned with “den Maßregeln meiner Erziehung” (I, 23) and, beginning as a young girl, he inaugurates her into a religious, albeit largely masculine, education. Karsch describes how, “Die liebreichste Seele sprach in jedem Wort seines Unterrichts, und in weniger als einem Monat las ich ihm mit aller möglichen Fertigkeit die Sprüchwörter Salomonis vor” (I, 23.). Karsch reads from the Bible and these readings produce a specific effect: she begins to craft her thoughts accordingly: “Ich fing an zu denken, was ich las” (I, 23). There is no metaphysical component in this education. There is no mention of God providentially speaking through Scripture to move, or animate, Karsch’s soul. Rather, she is taught to expose herself to literature (in this case the Bible), to selectively choose from it certain truths (in this case, her uncle conducts this process for her by selecting wise sayings from the proverbs), and construct them into a unique mode of thinking (it is unique in that it is no longer the comprehensive form of knowledge that August Hermann Francke stipulates is necessary for the Pietist). The uncle thus uses religious texts as the basis for a more secular form of development; even though, within Karsch’s selection, she is still learning “die Grundsätze unserer Religion” (I, 23).

Karsch uses this educational paradigm for her own personal self-cultivation, which she initiates as an adult, while recollecting songs she learned as a child. She describes how, “hundert
geistliche Lieder waren in meinem Gedächtniß; meine Geschäfte hinderten mich nicht, die schönsten davon zu singen” (I, 110). Karsch begins to commune with herself, recollect her bygone days, place the whole of her past life before her eyes and get to know herself.\(^{20}\) What Karsch recollects, however, is not her uncle’s religious education, but rather her own independent studies. Instead of “the basic principles of her religion,” Karsch recalls music sheets. She had discovered them “in meinen Mädchenjahren auf dem Söller der Hauses meines Oheims bestäubt und voneinandergerissen” (I, 126). Not all of them were sacred; some were “Hochzeitgedichte mit viel Mythologie gemischt” (I, 126). Karsch’s desire for this music, as opposed to wisdom literature, marks a significant moment. She studies hymns as opposed to Scripture – something a traditional Pietist would never had done.\(^{21}\) Her action reveals a more modern pursuit: her discovery as a child of a specific self-interest and now, as an adult, the cultivation of this interest.

During this time, Karsch recollects two different forms of spiritual songs (geistliche Lieder): hymns (Loblieder) and lyric poetry (schwärmerische Lieder). In regard to the former, she only mentions Johann Frank’s hymns, which she refers to as “meine Lieblinge” (I, 124). Karsch does not mention a single word from these songs. Instead she describes how they make her feel. She states, “ich fühlte Zufriedenheit, wenn ich sie sang” (I, 126). This focus she then explains: “ich verstand ihren Inhalt nicht, aber sie kamen mir schön vor” (I, 126). Though the Pietist movement did stress an emotional relationship with God (as a reaction to Lutheranism’s polemical emphasis on doctrinal orthodoxy), Karsch’s lack of interest in theology is once again a departure. Her

\(^{20}\) For a theoretical background on self-communion, see Foucault, Care 50–51.

\(^{21}\) Pietism did have an enormously rich hymn and spiritual song culture. However, they would not have considered songs as the medium for transformative work in their life in the same way that they did for Scripture. For further background on Pietism and song culture, see McMullen and Miersemann.
emphasizes here is simply the possibilities of religious expression to evoke emotions, to overwhelm and transport its reader; to address the heart alone and not the mind. To this, she mixes memories of lyric poetry, and the more she rehearses these collections of songs, the greater the impact it has on her. First, they assuage her emotions, making her feel content in her current situation, then they increase her desire and appreciation in its aesthetic discourse, and finally this sentimental rhetoric that she imitates begins to become her actual language. She writes how, “Ich beschloß nun, selbst Verse zu machen; ich wählte die Melodie irgendeines geistlichen Liedes . . . und wiederholte den jetzgedichteten Vers so lange, bis er in meinem Gedächtniß halten blieb” (I, 126).

Thereafter, Karsch’s method of self-cultivation can be described as a cycle of memorization, recollection and application. This is done in a very singular and isolated manner. The first song that she recalls is Johann Frank’s “Cupido, ein Korbmacher.” But even here she cannot recall the whole song (“Ich vergaß das Übrige” [I, 126]), remembering only three lines:

Frau Venus lud einmal ihren Kahn von Schnecken,
Den sie mit Teppichen von Purpur ließ bedecken,
ein Haufen Nymphenvolk mit ihr zu fahren ein (I, 126).

These lines Karsch then imitates through a ‘free’ reconstruction of her own little poem:

Mein Herz verschloß das Lied, bis nach den Werkeltagen
Der stille Sabbath kam, dann erst entwarf mein Kiel
Die heimliche Geburt, die mir allein gefiel (I, 126).

Both the original and Karsch’s re-stylization are short and simple. However, instead of appealing to mythology, as the first poem does, Karsch infuses her verses with the personal (“Mein Herz” instead of “Venus”) and replaces communal activity (a large group of

\[22\] For an analysis on Johann Christoph Gottsched’s expectations for Anacreontic odes and songs, see Brown, “Poetry” 15–18.
mythological figures traveling on a carpet) with individual experience (Karsch celebrating the Sabbath). The main activity of this poem is re-inscribed with religious significance. But at the same time, Karsch again elevates emotion over dogma and sacred rituals (“die mir allein gefiel” [I, 126]). In doing so, her poem becomes visceral, with touch and physical sensation gaining a greater precedence over the evocation of sight and sound. Karsch’s sentiment, though, is not left in the realm of the abstract. She uses precise imagery (the Sabbath) in order to articulate a single emotion (here joy), and she does this for a specific purpose. For her, the Sabbath, like her books and songs, functions as an agent of temporary relief from her domestic toils by providing her with rest. In other words, Karsch utilizes the religious rhetoric she has memorized and recollected and now applies it to one of her current social situations in order to articulate emotional encouragement. In doing so, the religious becomes linked in a new way with the social; and the first recipient of this relief is none other than Karsch herself.

After this initial process of self-cultivation, Karsch considers an entirely new way of living. This reflection begins with a contemplation of the (unnamed) poet of the lyric poetry she reads. He becomes for her a model, both in being and in function. Karsch relates briefly the story of his development: he was supposed to become a pastor (“er war sonst für die Kanzel bestimmt” [I, 138]), however, in a seeming moment of divine intervention (during “die Hitze eines Fiebers” [I, 138]), he decides instead to become a poet. The poet’s transformation is framed in terms of changes in emotional states. He becomes impassioned; he gains a new enthusiasm for rhymes

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23 On Karsch’s combination of verse and letter-writing, see French, “Poetry” 51–54.

24 For a study on the sexual imagery within Karsch’s sensual evocations, see Prandi, “Sexual Imagery” 153–57.

that borders on delirium; and he is overcome with ecstasy. More significantly, his poetry becomes a new type of sermon: “als ihn aber diese Begeisterung des Reimens überfiel, waren seine Predigten und seine Gespräche nichts als Verse” (I, 141). His career choice becomes Karsch’s inspiration. It makes her “kühn” (I, 141) and she concludes her first letter with the declaration, “ich brannte . . . zu singen” (I, 138). These statements bring Karsch’s transformation full circle with the developmental story of the lyric poet. She is inspired to become a lyric poet, who, like her model poet, is also a preacher. This is undoubtedly a radical step – Karsch not only elevates herself to the level of the educated bourgeoisie and vies for a position in the public, professional field, but she also claims a position traditionally limited to men (the pastorate). Her only attempt to soften this blow to the polarization of the sexes is to offer a new context: she will sing her sermonic poems as opposed to presenting them in plain speech.

Thereafter Karsch begins her new ‘calling’ – a career as a pious, occasional poet – with her first performance at a marriage ceremony. In this moment she claims her persona as a poet pastor and her service is rendered within a church. Karsch describes her sermonic poem as follows: “Ich sang hurtig noch zween Verbindungen und wählte die ersten Menschen dazu: einmal in dem glückseligen Garten mit seiner Neugeschaffenen, und in dem andern sang ich, wie er mit ihr das verriegelte Eden verließ und, von Niemand als der Liebe begleitet, fortirrte” (II, 203). Karsch does not rewrite the creation story, rather she omits certain details and creates new emphases. The focus of her songs is the first people (“die ersten Menschen”), not God. Adam and Eve would be relatable characters to her peasant audience as they too were simple people, living in an agricultural context and who had been commanded “to work and keep” the land.

26 Both Jon Helgason and Ernst Josef Krzywon have pointed out that this is, historically speaking, not Karsch’s first actual performance. But her inference of it as such in the Lebensbericht reveals how she, in the tradition of Greek biographies, portrays the “Individuen in Szenen” (Helgason 267). She highlights only those moments that relate to the crafting of her poetic self.
(Gen. 2:15). But instead of work, what takes primary precedence here is the shift from one community of relations to another. The first is described as the relationship between God and his creation (“seine Neugeschaffene”) in the garden. The second is, after God removes his creation from the garden, the new relationship that arises between Adam and Eve, bonded together by love. The motifs of sin, the serpent and the fall are not mentioned. Instead, the catalyst from the first to the second relationship is an unexplained, and potentially unfair, hardship. Being outside of the garden, love now, as opposed to God, becomes the humans’ only source of hope. As such, this new creation narrative becomes a metaphor for the peasant way of life, a life wrought with innumerable hardships, and, as Karsch argues, the love between a man and woman will help them persevere in the midst of their non-utopian life. This message inspires the very enthusiastic response that she is looking for. The postmaster himself becomes, as she describes, “mein Bewunderer” (II, 188) and of the rest of the audience she states, “man wird ganz Verwunderung” (II, 203). These people are both encouraged as well as enraptured by the poem and by Karsch herself.

This first performance initiates a conversion moment. Karsch states, “mich dünkt, mein Genie war jetzt gleich einem Vogel, der zum ersten Mal sich seiner Gabe zu fliegen bewußt ist” (II, 203). The language of this statement is revealing twofold. First, it shows the secularization of this conversion. God is omitted. Karsch’s focus is not on devotion or meditation but on herself. As such, the biblical terminologies and contexts traditionally used to describe the moment of faith are replaced with motifs of self-representation; in this case, a flying bird. Nevertheless,

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27 For more on motifs of self-representation, see Niggl, “Säkularisation” 167.

28 The term “Vogel” is a contested motif for scholars within pietistic conversion narratives. According to August Langen’s Der Wortschatz des deutschen Pietismus (1954), the image of the bird, often the eagle, flying towards the sun, symbolized the flight of a spirit or the soul towards the divine (197-99). Peter Damrau, conversely, argues that the bird motif is used as a counter to traditional biblical imagery (168). In terms of Karsch’s specific use of the bird,
second, a transformation is still taking place. The emphasis here is not on her soul, but on her intellect (her “Genie”).

Karsch evokes the imagery of a human-to-animal metamorphosis in order to describe a change of thoughts, from earthly to transcendent, from bound to being free. In short, her conversion moment is her moment of individualization. This first performance proves that she can think freely for herself as an individual woman and poet; she can exercise her own poetic thoughts as she wants; and even that her poetry is received well by an audience. In similar fashion to receiving a confirmation from God, Karsch now believes that her purpose in life is to be a poet, which in evoking the motif of the bird she describes as the ability “to fly.”

Karsch nevertheless continues to align her autonomous self within traditional social norms. Her third letter is written during the Third Silesian War (1756–63). During this time she begins to write war poetry and throughout it she highlights how her poetic output dovetails with national interests. She writes: “Ich hörte von den Thaten Friedrichs und brannte sie zu singen. Der Name des Königs allein, wenn er genannt ward; schien mich anzuflammen” (I, 135). There were very few female writers during this time and even less that dealt with war literature. Those that did usually let their works fall under one of two categories: Sehnsuchtslieder (widows who wrote on the deaths of beloved soldiers) or Amazonenlieder (songs about women who dressed as men and fought in the war).

Karsch by contrast is neither overtly sentimental nor masculine. Instead, she decides to infuse her war poems with a distinctly patriotic tone. Though she has just become an independent woman, she does not seek to deviate from stipulated gender norms. Her poems do

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29 For a discussion of “Genie” around 1760 with an eye on Karsch, see Baldwin, “Sappho” 64–72, Barndt, “Dasein” 168–69 and Schaffers, Elend 42–57.

30 For an extensive background on gender and “Kriegslyrik,” see Birgfeld, “Patriotische Erregung” 192–94.
not focus on her own self or simply serve to please the self, rather they praise a specific man. King Friedrich II is her muse; even the mention of his name provides inspiration. Karsch thus casts herself as a servant to the king. But this servitude has a double meaning; for she is in fact now devoted to two kings – first and foremost, God, and now, to a specific man. In her declaration that she wants to sing about the “king,” the national context is certainly evoked, but so is the religious. Karsch does this in order to show that her earthly service functions as a form of piety (or devotion) for her spiritual service.

Furthermore, Karsch highlights three uses of her war poetry. First, her songs foretell the king’s victories; for example, she writes, “[Ich] schickte mich an, den Sieg des Königs zu singen . . . Ich kam zurück und mit mir die wichtige Nachricht des Sieges bei Leuthen” (III, 265); and, in doing so, she echoes in her own way the famous Choral von Leuthen (1647). Second, her songs invoke divine aid: “Die östreichische Macht ward auf den böhmischen Gebirgen bei Prag geschlagen; ich sang eine Art von Siegspsalm, und er gefiel” (II, 251). Finally, she assuages soldiers by singing about the king: “Ich befand mich gleich Einem, der von schweren Träume erwacht; ich erhollte mich und sang ein Lied auf den Geburtstag des König” (II, 295). Karsch’s poetry has a supernatural effect on both individual battles and humans. They are pastoral to the extent that they help facilitate psychological healing for soldiers (much in the same way that her earlier wedding poem provided relief and encouragement to her fellow peasants). At the same time they are also prophetic as Karsch uses them to literally ordain Prussian victories. Her third letter thus functions as a climax in the Lebensbericht – like the ‘fruit’ of a believer’s life, her poetry shows a correlating aesthetic arrangement to her post-conversion state. It is providentially supported thereby allowing it to still fit the parameters of a spiritual practice. It is also necessary. Karsch inscribes her process of poetic self-cultivation within a greater political history, making
the two dependent on each other. She elevates the usefulness of her poetry (the product of her self-interests) to such an extent that without it the war would have been lost.

The *Lebensbericht* then concludes in a celebratory fashion. Karsch takes great pains to highlight the king’s recognition of her. He first rewards her financially, allowing her and her family to live comfortably: “Er wolle für mich und meine Kinder sorgen” (III, 316). But then he also promotes her to court poet: “Er glaube, daß hier mein Genie unter Sorgen der Nahrung erstickt, und daß es in der großen berlinischen Welt mehr hervordringen werde” (III, 316). This is the crowning moment of Karsch’s entire life narrative. She has made her process of self-cultivation and her justification of it explicit. But she ends her autobiography with an invocation of external support. Her poetic output culminates into a service for the king and the king in turn affirms how necessary her work is. Karsch thus seals the *Lebensbericht* with a male-sanctioning of her development into a pious professional.

Anna Louisa Karsch’s pious self-cultivation is both paradoxical and ground-breaking. On the one hand, she is a self-taught woman, who uses the spiritual exercise of introspective reading first from the Bible and later from lyric poetry to both discover and then cultivate her self-interests, and her development of poetic capacities becomes the catalyst to her professionalization, resulting in her entrance into the public realm. But, on the other hand, her self-cultivation is not simply to please her own self, but rather it is still framed with a pietistic purpose. In her fusion of emerging modern concepts of the self and subjective forms of piety, Karsch introduces new emphases: agency instead of divine orchestration, development rather than conversion and engagement in the world rather than retreat. For her it is no longer as significant to be in right relationship with God but rather to serve him by helping others. This in-between space also becomes her spiritual justification for her secular pursuit: Karsch uses her
poems as sermons and in doing so gives her profession (or ‘calling’) a sacred stamp. Her position as pastoral poet still challenges the model of separate-spheres gender economy. However, her path appeases these concerns with a distinctly female overlay. Her poems are by no means traditional sermons, rather simple, emotional expressions; they do not seek to rival theological dogmas or truths, only to provide encouragement; and the sole purpose is not to challenge religious, social or even national parameters, but rather to promote national interests. Through all of this, Karsch paves a path to a modern, female self. Her journey shows this transition and, notably, reveals the founding role that pietism plays in it.

C. A New Spiritual Aesthetic

Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling’s Lebensgeschichte and Anna Louisa Karsch’s Lebensbericht not only fashion a new form of ‘calling’ but also exemplify through their work that its solution requires a fundamentally new spiritual aesthetics. Both Jung-Stilling and Karsch attempt a formal-aesthetic solution objectified in their unique idiom of autobiographical writing. Their narratives reconstruct the professional’s seemingly individualistic pursuits as helpful and indeed necessary to the larger community. Unfolding in similar form to the pietistic confession, the Lebensgeschichte and the Lebensbericht respectively, culminate with an exposition of their services to humanity. Jung-Stilling, as the first oculist doctor in Germany, initiates path-breaking developments in medicine from which he is able to bring physical healing to those previously denigrated as incurable. Karsch becomes the first female, national poet of her day and she uses her songs to contribute to the war effort, providing emotional encouragement to those involved. Indeed dedication to the ‘calling’ becomes a form of service. Jung-Stilling’s and Karsch’s
pursuits require asceticism in private life, watchfulness at every moment, and re-investment rather than consumption. In their dedication and asceticism, they act as an individualist, but at the same time Protestant version of the religious vocation. To legitimate the present individual – that is, the product of a career of self-interested professionalization – they both create a new definition of service that is fundamentally supported by a subjective form of piety and actualized through their own personal achievements.

Jung-Stilling’s and Karsch’s services to society share numerous commonalities. First, they both serve all levels of society. Karsch sings to men and women, soldiers and royalty alike. Jung-Stilling also makes no differentiation between rich or poor; for he promises to serve everyone without pay. It is precisely because of their professional expertise that both are able to overcome individual singularities and benefit humanity as a whole: eye care in Jung-Stilling’s case and encouragement in Karsch’s. Second, they both serve people en masse. Jung-Stilling and Karsch find a viable means of serving a collective public. In the midst of rapidly diversifying socioeconomic, cultural and political changes, their personal self-interests create stabilizing forces. Karsch’s service aids the war effort, while Jung-Stilling provides a unique form of financial service to his fellow citizens. Their spiritual aspirations thus become part of an ideal and unified civic ethos. Their ‘callings’ are thus made through their actions. Furthermore, their service possesses a powerful sociological imagination, has a strong sense of the need for a social field for the endeavors towards self-realization and for a form of self-regulation. That is, their services allow for an overcoming of the indeterminate state of flux through consistent, responsible, dedicated action. In the midst of rising, heterogeneous interests and identifications of individuals, of uneven development of local and regional communities, Jung-Stilling and Karsch utilize their specific skills to enable harmonious, social systems.
Their point of difference, conversely, relates specifically to the position from which they serve. Jung-Stilling serves society independently. He not only acts in a wholly autonomous mode of being, but his individual, medical services are also original. The Lebensgeschichte makes clear that Jung-Stilling acts under no authority but his own; in particular, he is not controlled by either his family or the pietist community. In doing so, he does not attempt to emulate the psychology of a similarly positioned pietist community; for there is no corporate religious body attempting to serve the greater society in a similar manner. Rather, he writes his own history. Jung-Stilling’s Lebensgeschichte is a singular, meta-professional narrative and his services within are wholly different from those enacted within other pietistic confessional writing. His medical practice, nevertheless, is spiritually constructed. His profession is divinely ordained, his skills as a doctor are cultivated via spiritual practices and he offers his service as an overflow from his relationship to the divine. More significantly, he depicts this subjective, yet spiritually-overlaid service (as opposed to simple, pious living) as being exactly what society needs. It is the independent, spiritual self that gives back to the community in its own way and on its own terms that is now seen as being of greater usefulness than the traditional Pietist.

Karsch, on the other hand, serves the people while remaining subordinate to the king. Hers, however, is not a forced, but rather a strategic subordination. She pursues her self-interests independently and develops into the pious poet that she sought to become. But, despite this, Karsch willingly chooses to act in a specifically non-independent manner. Through her songs, she elevates the social over the personal and the representation of other as opposed to self. In particular, she allows King Friedrich II to dictate both the context and the content of her poems. Instead of acting according to an alienated mode of being, she depicts in her Lebensbericht that the only viable form of service is one that conforms to existing political, social and gender
norms. But, interestingly, her repression creates an effective discipline for female self-interests; for it is exactly this approach that induces the king in turn to mobilize her socialization. In denying her right to autonomy, she is rewarded with poetic independence. Thereafter, she is even able to achieve a harmonious relationship between her cultivated, inner self and society as she is praised wherever she goes. The spiritual component within Karsch’s service thus acts as a unique tool: it initially instigates her conformity to the ‘public,’ but in the end she too (like Jung-Stilling) is granted the freedom to serve this same ‘public’ as she pleases.

The spiritual service in Jung-Stilling’s Lebensgeschichte and in Karsch’s Lebensbericht outlined above is thus unique; it is hard to find its equivalent either prior to or after these two life narratives. However, their influence is undoubted. For both Jung-Stilling and Karsch it is paramount that the self accept social responsibilities largely because of their belief that their active engagement in the sanctification of the world will promise their own sanctification. The cultivation of such a social self reinstates the loss of faith in life’s meaning (a rising threat within the distinctive conditions of the modern world); it stabilizes the perceived relativity of values recognized in historicism; and counters the restlessness of attention fostered by a multiplicity of distractions. While the ‘decadent’ may have succumbed to these vices, responding by shaping a life of withdrawal and artifice, Jung-Stilling and Karsch provide a counter model. More importantly, their active link between ‘calling’ and service influences later developmental paradigms of the self. Although the separation of the words Beruf and Berufung took place during the last decades of the eighteenth century, the term Beruf that Jung-Stilling and Karsch exemplify in their works – with its inner ‘calling’ and social manifestations – continues on into autobiographical writings of the nineteenth century.
III. CHAPTER TWO:

THE SPIRITUAL SELF DIVIDED IN KARL PHILIPP MORITZ’S ANTON REISER (1785) AND ANGELIKA ROSA’S LEBENSSCHICKSALE EINER DEUTSCHEN FRAU IM 18. JAHRHUNDERT IN EIGENHÄNDIGEN BRIEFEN (1784/85)

The evolving notion of ‘calling’ in the eighteenth century – an amalgam of natural talent, Lutheranism, conversion and vocation – was implemented by an array of autobiographical writings in a variety of ways. Some, like Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling (1740–1817) and Anna Louisa Karsch (1722–91), emphasized its ethical slant in their life narratives. That is, they found a way to overlap the converging notions of caring for the self and serving God within the medium of their profession. Others took a different approach. The writers Karl Philipp Moritz (1756–93) and Angelika Rosa (1734–1790) took advantage of this new ‘calling’s’ utilitarian opportunities, choosing to create the appearance of serving God in their fictional accounts in order to accomplish their main purpose, namely the crafting of a professional self. Max Weber, in his treatise The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism (1905), describes the thought process behind this secular approach. It is possible, he argues, to exhibit pious characteristics such as “punctuality, hard work, moderation etc.” (11) in order to simply “enhance one’s standing in the community” (12). Indeed “the mere appearance of virtue is an adequate substitute wherever it serves the same purpose” (12), namely in bringing credit, good reputation and the increase of one’s wealth. In other words, it seemed possible to reduce the pious notion of ‘calling’ to a mere egocentric maxim in order to serve the purposes and pleasures of the self.
In the fictional accounts Anton Reiser (1785) and Lebensschicksale einer deutschen Frau im 18. Jahrhundert in eigenhändigen Briefen (1784/85), the protagonists Reiser and Rosa respectively set out to craft the self. However, both of their approaches seem erratic. Instead of following one particular developmental paradigm, these characters travel in a continuous state of flux in between two very different models; the one emphasizing the traditional, pietistic conception of ‘calling’ and the latter its utilitarian uses. Indeed, as this chapter argues, they oscillate between moments of proximity and distance to spiritual concerns (specifically piety) within their processes of self-cultivation. Both are born into and grow up in pietistic households and, initially, it may appear as if their continual lean towards religion reveals the strength of the link to their pietistic childhood. However, upon closer examination, the error of this assumption is illuminated. Reiser and Rosa incorporate piety within their self-cultivation only when it is useful. In fact, close readings of the text will reveal that their proximity to spirituality is strategically timed – it is only in those moments where they are struggling in the crafting of the self that they draw near to concerns of the soul and, when this provides them with the progress needed, they relinquish spirituality again in favor of strict self-concentration. Neither seeks to truly serve God through their actions. However, both are willing to utilize the occasional appearance of serving God in order to advance their self professionally.

This chapter considers the effectiveness of the utilitarian approach to ‘calling’ in Karl Philipp Moritz’s Anton Reiser and Angelika Rosa’s Lebensschicksale. Is it able to conjoin the conceits of self and God as successfully as in Jung-Stilling’s Lebensgeschichte and Karsch’s Lebensbericht? Or does this utilitarian approach have its moment of breakdown? The first section (I) will trace the utilitarian approach to ‘calling’ in three instances in Anton Reiser’s life:

31 Henceforth cited as Lebensschicksale.
his development as a hat maker, a preacher and, finally, as an actor. Through close readings of these three stages, this section will highlight those moments in which Reiser begins to struggle in the crafting of his self, how and when he draws proximally close to spirituality, and how his utilization of spirituality allows for the self to progress. It will also consider key moments in which Reiser also chooses not to incorporate piety and the effects that this has on his self-cultivation. The second section (II) turns to the *Lebensschicksale*. Rosa wants to become an intellectual woman with a prominent position in the public sphere. She is placed under the tutelage of a Turkish woman, Madame Groot, who provides her the necessary skills and practices to achieve this goal. She at times struggles in this endeavor of self due to external factors and it is these same factors that force her to turn to the care of the soul. In the *Lebensschicksale* these conceits are diametrically opposed. This section, however, will show how Rosa seeks to utilize spirituality to her advantage and thus turn back to the cultivation of a professional self. Finally, the conclusion (III) will consider the specific middle-class bent of this utilitarian approach to ‘calling.’

A. Karl Philipp Moritz’s *Anton Reiser* (1785)

Karl Philipp Moritz’s psychological novel, *Anton Reiser* (1785), is an interesting example within the genre of the *Bildungsroman*. The novel charts how the protagonist, a young man named Anton, seeks out his place in the world, tracing first his intellectual trajectory and then his professional development. However, nothing seems to go right for Anton – his near-constant transferring from one school to another, and the unfavorable treatment at the hands of teachers and classmates, keeps him from deriving much from his education. Anton’s explorations of
various careers are just as tedious: he explores work as a hat-maker, a pastor and later an actor in the theater, but he is never able to retain any one position for long and, even while holding a position, he does not take great pleasure in it. The novel ends with him sitting on a hillside, frustrated and in despair, having learned that the theater troupe he had wanted to join has left him behind, and he is once again jobless. Thus, while Anton is set on a developmental course, his development neither conforms to an organized chronology nor does it ever stabilize.

The question that looms large in the novel is the source of Reiser’s struggles. This section argues that the answer is linked to the issue of spiritual self-cultivation in the novel. In the crafting of his self, Anton experiences both moments of proximity and distance to a distinct spiritual concern. He oscillates between understanding himself at times as a secular and other times as a religious workman with the recipient of his labor fluctuating between his own self and God. Initially, this spiritual concern arises in moments where his self-cultivation is lagging, and focusing on the soul not only creates miniature moments of conversion in the narrative but it also allows for the progression of the self. This oscillation can be seen in three instances of Anton’s life: in his training, first, as a tradesman, second, as a preacher, and finally, as an actor. However, as Anton continues to make his way through the world, his distances to spiritual concerns become more frequent and this plays a distinct role in the breakdown of his self-cultivation.

Reiser’s self-cultivation begins as a child under the tutelage of the hatter Lobenstein. The narrative states, “Nun hieß es, der Hutmacher Lobenstein in Braunschweig wolle sich Antons wie ein Freund annehmen, er solle bei ihm wie ein Kind gehalten sein und nur leichte und anständige Arbeiten, als etwa Rechnungen schreiben, Bestellungen ausrichten und dergleichen übernehmen, als dann solle er auch noch zwei Jahre in die Schule gehen, bis er konfirmiert wäre und sich dann zu etwas entschließen könnte” (39). This introductory statement is revealing of
both Reiser’s class and future prospects. Unlike the privileged sons of nobility and the urban upper class, he has no opportunity to receive instruction from private tutors at home. His sole educational path is through the public school and this he can only access after having successfully cultivated a trade (a situation not uncommon in the German states prior to nineteenth-century reforms). Nevertheless, this career trajectory is critical to Reiser’s budding middle-class identity; albeit the petite bourgeoisie (working middle-class). By entering into a trade, he would not have to define himself by his birth, but rather by what he did – his occupation and, later, his education. That is, in beginning to do “leichte und anständige” tasks in Lobenstein’s shop and in beginning to develop knowledge in economics, how to read and write, and how to manage bills, Reiser is already beginning to cultivate a specifically middle-class self, whose respectability and sobriety he expects will afford both pride and pleasure (e.g., wealth and social mobility) to the individual. Hard work in the hatter’s workshop thus becomes the key to unlocking not only intellectual but also professional development and Reiser, cognizant of this paradigm, cannot wait to begin the trade: “Dies klang in Antons Ohren äußerst angenehm” (39).

The work place, however, is immediately plagued with exploitation and contradiction. Lobenstein proves to be “ein strenger Herr und Meister” (42), instead of, as Anton had imagined, “ein künftiger Freund und Wohltäter” (42). He does not see Anton as his own child (as Reiser had hoped), but simply “sein Lehrjunge” (42) who he approaches in a “kalte, trockne, gebieterische Miene” (42). The work is much like the master: tedious and hard. Reiser is employed in the most menial of work: “er mußte Holz spalten, Waser tragen und die Werkstatt auskehren” (42). The idealized image of the workplace for the middle-class citizen immediately contrasts with its harsh reality. It quickly becomes apparent that Lobenstein does not intend to tutor him in the art of hat making, but rather finds in Reiser a servant figure upon whom he can
delegate the hardest of tasks. This hatmaker, who also belongs to the *petite bourgeoisie*, does not aid his apprentice but rather stifles him and, in doing so, his workshop (the very site considered to be a gateway for self-cultivation) becomes the social condition that prohibits personal development. Instead of helping to boost Reiser’s pride in his work, it begins stripping him of self-esteem. First, he finds little enjoyment in these tasks: “So sehr dies gegen seine Erwartungen abstach, wurde ihm doch das Unangenehme einigermaßen durch den Reiz der Neuheit ersetzt” (42). Soon thereafter he also becomes embarrassed by them. Furthermore, the solutions to this problem seem limited. Within this secular paradigm, it is only through hard work that the individual achieves self-mastery that leads to professional accomplishments. However, in lacking a cultivated self, Reiser is unable to exert any form of agency over his situation. He cannot dictate the type of work assigned to him and, as such, his trajectory seems out of his control.

Reiser’s response is akin to that of many other literary (and, notably, female) characters forced into similar situations of confinement: he attempts to escape. Like Richardson’s Clarissa or La Roche’s Fräulein von Sternheim in the eponymous novels, Reiser resorts to a sort of role-playing; but what makes his efforts unique is the context within which he imagines himself. He chooses to soften the unpleasantness of his situation by seeing his work through a spiritual lens. The mental shift is dramatic: within the span of a single paragraph, he stops viewing his menial tasks as part of the development of the self and instead turns it into soul-work. He does this, first, by reimagining Lobenstein’s workshop as a temple: “Oft war ihm die geräumige Werkstatt mit ihren schwarzen Wänden und dem schauerlichen Dunkel, das des Abends und Morgens nur durch den Schimmer einiger Lampen erhellte, ein Tempel, worin er diente” (42). Second, Anton sees himself as a priest conducting holy duties within it: “Des Morgens zündet er unter den großen Kesseln das heilige belebende Feuer an, wodurch nun den Tag über alles in Arbeit
und Tätigkeit erhalten und so vieler Hände beschäftigt wurden. Er betrachtete dann dies Geschäft wie eine Art von Amt, dem er in seinen Augen eine gewisse Würde erteilte” (42). In these moments, Anton’s workshop is no longer a dingy, uncomfortable cell, but rather a place where God dwells; and the objects within it, like the vats of dye, have become equal to an altar (sacred objects to be handled with care). Anton thus creates a momentary shift. Instead of conducting his work for his own self, he begins to act as if it is for God and his pleasure. This escapist mentality is not condemned, as it is with Clarissa and Sternheim, but rather painted in a positive light. In seeing himself as a priest, Reiser awards himself, not with advancement in the world, but rather with “Würde” (42), a religious appropriation of self-worth. This is then followed by a new form of happiness. He thinks to himself that, “er konnte sich ordentlich über sein Werk freuen” (43).

Reiser’s invocation of spirituality is intentional, revealing the direct influence of pietism on his childhood education. As a child, his father played the role of the domineering patriarch, training his son to follow in his own model. He instills within him the principles of the Quietist way of life, and in particular the works of Madame Guyon, in which the “vollige Ausgehen aus sich selbst und Eingehen in ein seliges Nichts, jene gänzliche Ertötung aller sogenannten ‘Eigenheit’ oder ‘Eigenliebe’ und eine völlig uninteressierte Liebe zu Gott” (6) is emphasized. These theological precepts are imposed upon Reier. He describes how they were “die ersten

32 For a useful study on the pietistic conceits utilized within Anton Reiser and their function as Leitmotiv, see Dierse, “Selbstreflexionen” 95–96.

33 Marcia Allentuck, conversely, provides a different background for Anton’s spiritual pursuits. She first argues that Anton Reiser falls within the picaresque genre and as such, states that “[Reiser’s] quest for survival is transmuted into a quest for self-definition as he begins to approach a more expansive character, thus rising above the normative strains of the externalized picaresque novel to become the protagonist of a spiritual autobiography in the finest sense of the Bildungsroman” (331).

34 Jeanne-Marie Bouvier de la Motte-Guyon (commonly known as Madame Guyon; 1648–1717) was a French mystic and one of the key advocates of Quietism.
Töne, die sein Ohr vernahm” (9). Furthermore, he calls them “diese ersten Eindrücke” (9), which he could never “in seinem Leben aus seiner Seele verwischen” (9). The father imprints on his son an extreme form of self-denial, making him bound to this worldview for as long as he also remains bound to his father. Though Anton attempts, even as a young apprentice, to veer more toward his own self and its interests, the recurring presence of his father brings him back into proximity with spiritual concerns; the above moment in the workshop is no exception. Just before Reiser escapes into his religiously-tinted imagination, the narrative notes that his father had just been at Lobenstein’s for “wenige Tage” (42). Undoubtedly, Anton’s nearness to his father creates both the catalyst and the boundaries to this renewed religious ideology. This moment reveals how Anton is still subservient to the authority of his father much in the same way that a parishioner is to the institution of the church. He is not thinking on his own, but rather compelled to act based on specified rules and regulations laid out by an outside agent.

This spiritual approach to work is, nevertheless, beneficial and becomes the impetus for self-improvement. Thereafter, Reiser fulfills his tasks so well and so thoroughly that Lobenstein promotes him. The text states, “Er bekam nun auch eine schwarze Schürze wie der andre Lehrbursche, und anstatt daß ihn dieser Umstand hätte niederschlagen sollen, trug er vielmehr vieles zu seiner Zufriedenheit bei” (48). This moment initiates the beginning of a cyclical pattern in the narrative: Reiser oscillates in a monotonous rhythm of despair followed by hope, and this cycle is paramount to his development. Had he simply become depressed, he would have remained a water-carrier indefinitely, but instead his religious fervor became the means for entrance into a real apprenticeship. Thus, by working for God, Anton implicitly worked for his own self. However, in having been promoted (as well as his father being at home many miles away now), Reiser immediately lays his religious imagination aside and begins giving greater
attention again to the self: “Er fing an, an den übrigen Handwerksgebräuchen eine Art von Gefallen zu finden, der ihn nichts eiferiger wünschen ließ, als dieselben einmal mitmachen zu können” (48). If before Anton had seen himself as a priest, now he reverts back to seeing (or rather envisioning) himself as a hat-maker; the image of the religious workman is replaced with one that is entirely secular; and the notion of serving God is forgotten in the pursuit of individual achievement. This reversion reveals Reiser’s perceived purpose of religious ideology, namely it is a ploy that when needed can be overlapped with the self for his own personal gain.

The satirical nature of the workshop nevertheless continues. For even though Reiser begins to craft his self, he does not simply seek to gain self-pleasure but rather to achieve Lobenstein’s favor. In doing so, the pursuit of pleasing God or even his earthly father is replaced with pleasing a substitutionary master. Nevertheless, it seems effective. Lobenstein now, as opposed to Anton’s spiritual imaginings, alleviates his work load, while also lavishing attention on him: “Indes blieb Anton jetzt von harten und niedrigen Arbeiten mehr wie sonst verschont. Lobenstein ging zuweilen mit ihm spazieren; ja, er nahm ihm sogar einen Klaviermeister an” (49). To this is added hours spent together in reading (“in den Schriften des Taulerus, Johannes vom Kreutz und ähnlichen Büchern” [49]) and prayer. Lobenstein singularly begins to provide a well-rounded education for Anton in which intellectual capacities in economics, religion and the arts are combined. The narrative thus presents a contradictory image of the tutor: Lobenstein oscillates from oppressive to nurturing. The gesture is both humorous and dubious, for the master’s kindness is just as exploitative. Lobenstein assigns Reiser specific readings relating to humility and self-denial in order to continually force him into submission. An inevitable master scheme results: either Anton focuses on the conversion of his soul under God’s (via his father’s) authority or he advances his own self under Lobenstein’s tutelage. Neither scheme is conducted
in a fully independent fashion. If Anton cultivates his work skills properly, he fulfills his obedience to Lobenstein, who in turn helps Anton advance his self for the purpose of further submission.

This paradoxical state is inevitably followed by crisis. For no reason of his own, Reiser falls out of favor with Lobenstein and is forced back into the menial labor of the workshop. The text states, “Der Winter kam heran, und jetzt fing Antons Zustand wirklich an, hart zu werden: er mußte Arbeiten verrichten, die seine Jahre und Kräfte weit überstiegen” (52). Lobenstein makes him remove hats from a boiling dye-vat during the middle of the night and wash them in the nearby Oker River. Not only does this force Anton outside in freezing temperatures for long periods of time, in which he has to first cut a hole in the ice before washing the hats, but also “dieser oft wiederholte Übergang von der Hitze zum Frost machte, daß Anton beide Hände aufsprangen und das Blut ihm herausspritzte” (52). This situation is problematic in that Reiser is too young for the work. He has neither the knowledge nor the strength, causing fatigue in both areas instead of growth. Even worse, he is taxed emotionally. The reader finds Anton on the verge of a relapsing depression: “Dies hätte ihn niederschlagen sollen” (52). This shifting pendulum in his emotional stability reveals the fragility of Anton as a budding individual. He wants to cultivate his self, but only when it is enjoyable. The overall impossibility of his situation seems to indicate that the door to self-cultivation has once again been shut.

Interestingly, as this scene unfolds, so too does Reiser’s opinion of his current master. In particular, his childlike, anguished relation to paternal authority is revealed. The text introduces an effective attack on Lobenstein: “Er schien ihn jetzt wie ein Werkzeug zu betrachten, das man wegwirft, wenn man es gebraucht hat” (52). It is not religious subjectivity that is problematized in this moment, but rather authorial subjectivity in general. Reiser now understands Lobenstein’s
treatment of him. The master sees him, the apprentice, as nothing more than a “tool;” he is not attributed human dignity but rather is denigrated to the value of the other instruments in the workshop to be used and then tossed aside. The authority that Lobenstein embodies is unstable and arbitrary.\(^{35}\) He affects Reiser’s life, but not in ways that Reiser expects or desires and, for this reason, Reiser begins to doubt his effectiveness. The text states, “Er fing an der Wahrheit des Orakelspruchs von dem Herrn von Fleischbein an zu zweifeln” (52). In questioning Lobenstein’s judgments, Reiser is by extension also challenging his power to fulfill or deny his aspirations as an individual subject. Furthermore, because Lobenstein acts as a central figure within the narrative’s secular concept of work, the critique of the former brings the latter into question as well. In short, Reiser inserts a poignant caveat into his narrative of self-cultivation: though he wants to continue working hard in order to achieve his intellectual and professional goals, he wants to do so independently. To care for the self (a process which leads to self-mastery) cannot be actualized whilst still under external governing bodies (whether he is able to act upon this new resolve is evident in the later instances of his life).

For the present, Reiser finds a singular solution to his dilemma: he draws near again to the pietistic work ethic. While at the Oker river, he starts to sing; “er mochte sich am liebsten in religiösen Schwärmereien” (53); he dwells on notions of “Aufopferung” and “gänzlicher Hingebung” (53); and he is especially moved by the expression “Opferaltar” (53). Anton thus (re)inscribes his current duties with religious significance. He no longer conducts them for Lobenstein’s sake, but for God’s. The priestly language is re-called with his work described as a “sacrifice” and the vats and icy waters as God’s “altar.” More significantly, in this new and

\(^{35}\) For a comparison on authoritative figures in Moritz’s *Anton Reiser* with Wieland’s *Agathon*, see Minden, “Anton Reiser” 82–85.
sacred approach, Anton momentarily denies the self. In using the term “Aufopferung,” Anton relinquishes more than just his work; he gives up his very being. This moment mirrors the act of conversion in a pietistic confession. This soul-work initiates a refinement-through-fire transformative process, for the giving up of his will causes an immediate transformation in thought: “Er blickte mit einer Art von Stolz auf seine Hände und betrachtete die blutigen Merkmale daran als so viel Ehrenzeichen von seiner Arbeit” (53). This return to spirituality summarizes the unique organization of Reiser’s development. He cultivates the self when it is pleasurable, and the soul when pleasure is absent. That is, the focus on the soul (these mini-conversions) allows him psychologically to persevere through the mundane in order to eventually turn back to the self. Furthermore, though the religious concept of work appears to be merely an imaginative tool, it seems far more effective in achieving self-cultivation than the secular work ethic that is regulated by outside forces.

However, despite creating a moderately useful work mentality, Reiser decides to change course. He loses interest in his work as an apprentice and seeks out a new occupation. This shift in pleasures is both humorous and satirically-intended, for while the narrative offers an enlightened prescriptive against bourgeois boredom through work, it is also work that Reiser becomes bored of. In his attempts at individualization via professionalization, he is pursuing his self-interests, but at the same time he is not fully sure of what his interests are. The result is a malleable and largely instable self. He continues to seek out intellectual stimulation through other mediums, more as an exploration than as a definitive, and eventually finds a potential career path within the church. One Sunday, Reiser hears a sermon by a Pastor Paulmann. The text does not give much attention to the sermon’s content, but instead focuses on its delivery:

36 For a biblical reference to refinement, see Mal. 3:2–3.
“Erst langsam und feierlich, und dann immer schneller und fortströmender: so wie er inniger in seine Materie eindrang, so fing das Feuer der Beredsamkeit in seinen Augen an zu blitzen, aus seiner Brust an zu atmen und bis in seine äußersten Fingerspitzen Funken zu sprühen. Alles war an ihm in Bewegung; sein Ausdruck durch Mienen, Stellung und Gebärden überschritt alle Regeln der Kunst und war doch natürlich, schön und unwiderstehlich mit sich fortreißend” (55).

The effects are just as electrifying. Reiser believes he has witnessed a prophet like in the days of ancient Israel (“Anton glaubte einen der Propheten zu hören” [56]) and, like a prophet, Paulmann has shaken him and moved him to tears (“er wiederholte sich jeden Ausdruck, der ihn erschüttert oder zu Tränen gerührt hatte” [56]).

By the time he returns home, he is convinced that he wants to be just like this prophetic pastor. But Reiser’s desire to become a preacher like Paulmann is in no way a religious pursuit; he has no intention of using preaching for salvific purposes, i.e., to win souls for God. In fact, he creates a greater distance to any spiritual concern with this interest, for he simply likes the idea of becoming a famous and respected orator, who has the power to move an audience.

The new interest in preaching becomes the catalyst to a second attempt in self-cultivation. Reiser leaves Lobenstein’s workshop and begins attending an institute in Hanover to learn how to preach. In many ways, this institute mirrors a pietistic school: the children are taught for eight to twelve hours a day under extraordinarily close supervision; instruction is virtually continuous, apart from moments where the children are posed catechism questions; and no games or recess is permitted. Every morning, Reiser is educated on “den Lehrbegriff der lutherischen Kirche ganz dogmatisch mit allen Widerlegungen der Papisten sowohl als der Reformierten” (81). However,

37 For a different interpretation of Reiser’s attraction to Pastor Paulmann and his desire to emulate him, see Stewart, “Queer Attraction” 49.
he intentionally reallocates this education’s purpose. He resolutely prevents it from being used as a weapon to battle his innate sinfulness or to purge him of his willful depravity, and those parts of his education that treat this subject he denigrates as “viele unnütze Zeuge” (81). Instead, he approaches this information as a set of truths useful for crafting sermons – both in style and content. In doing so, Reiser reiterates his developmental objective: he seeks to craft a secular self, but is willing to utilize religious concepts and practices as needed. Furthermore, this purpose organizes the use. He writes down every lesson in his notebooks such that “in weniger als einem Jahr besaß er eine vollständige Dogmatik mit allen Beweisstellen aus der Bibel und einer vollständigen Polemik gegen Heiden, Türken, Juden, Griechen, Papisten und Reformierte” (81) and eventually he memorizes it all so that he spoke “wie ein Buch” (81) about transubstantiation in the Holy Communion, the five stages in the exaltation and humiliation of Christ, the chief doctrines of the Koran, and the principal proofs of God’s existence. This educational paragraph ends with a reiteration that Anton “redete nun auch wirklich wie ein Buch von allen diesen Sachen” (81). He has accumulated the necessary bodies of knowledge for his development.

Thereafter, Reiser attempts to spiritualize his intellectual cognition. This he does “am Ende der Woche” (83) during a class exercise. The narrative explains how, “des Sonnabends wurde immer, nachdem vorher das Lied ‘Bis hieher hat mich Gott gebracht’ gesungen war, von einem der Schüler ein langes Gebet gelesen” (83). This exercise is not intended for creative expression but rather rote memorization. However, Reiser consciously uses this moment to distinguish himself: “Wenn dies an Anton kam, so war das ein wahres Fest für ihn – er dachte sich auf der Kanzel, wo er noch während der letzten Verse des Gesanges seine Gedanken sammelte und nun auf einmal wie der Pastor Paulmann mit aller Fülle der Beredsamkeit in ein
brünstiges Gebet ausbrach” (83). Though the medium is a prayer, Reiser’s “eloquence” and “fervor” is compared with Paulmann, in particular the latter’s sermons with its emotional effects on congregants. But at the same time this is a uniquely crafted prayer – not only does it differ from the catechisms that the students were supposed to read (since it stems from Reiser’s own imagination), but it also diverges from the sermons he had studied. Reiser’s proclamation of self is calculated and planned. He collects his thoughts during an earlier time of singing, showing his ability to select ideas from the sermons he learns and to craft his own speech accordingly. Through this difference (even from the revered Paulmann), Reiser lays the foundations of his self-mastery; he begins to exercise his ability to think and act independently from those bodies of knowledge studied. Finally, for the first time in the narrative, the secular model of hard work proves effective. Not only does Reiser exercise agency over his education (an impossible act within Lobenstein’s workshop), but he also catalogues quantifiable results from his efforts.

This progression, however, is not accompanied with a pleasure of self. Instead, what ensues is an immediate confrontation between the two work models (and, by extension, ‘callings’). Though Reiser is able to use the religious model as he pleased within the workshop, he is not allowed to do so at the institute. The text states, “seine Deklamation bekam also für einen Schulknaben freilich zu viel Pathos, als daß dieses nicht hätte auffallend sein sollen. Der Lehrer ließ ihn also nur selten das Gebet lesen” (83). Even though Reiser achieves his goal of fervent oration, his listeners refuse to be emotionally evoked (at least not in the way Reiser had hoped for). His teachers, who represent traditional religious authoritative figures, are not open to his unique overlap of models. In fact, they are outright offended by his actions (“Das beleidigte den Lehrer” [83]). Their response is to actively suppress his efforts. They defend the traditional constructs for prayer, telling him that sermons, or in this case eloquent monologues, can evoke
emotion, but only according to predetermined and non-imaginative rules. Furthermore, they negate his creative expression by relegating his rule-less prayer as too emotional. Interestingly, the students are not mentioned in the passage. The focus lies specifically in this confrontation between Reiser and his teacher cohort. For in focusing on his self (specifically his study of intellectual knowledge alone and his pursuit of professional gain), he negates the institution’s emphasis on the transformation of the soul and, worse, his self-mastery challenges their knowledge and authority over him, implicitly threatening the entire school’s religious education. This confrontation provides a unique commentary in the midst of Reiser’s developmental path. It depicts the religious authorities in a negative light, showing how their intolerance as well their demand for a proper obedience to the traditional form of ‘calling’ obstructs personal progress. However, lest the reader forget, this critique is not simply limited to religion, but rather authority in general in that the oppression of these teachers is still categorically comparable to Lobenstein’s earlier harsh treatment of Reiser.

In an ironic twist, Reiser’s response is to utilize one of his teacher’s lessons to draw proximally close again to spirituality. He does not seem to be derailed by his teachers’ rebukes, rather he continues to find ways to circumvent them. During one particular session, Pastor Marquard uses an illustration to explain his own relationship with his students. He states “daß die Gläubigen Kinder Gottes sind, durch das Beispiel erklärte, wenn er mit irgendeinem aus der Zahl seiner jungen Zuhörer genauer umginge, ihn besonders zu sich kommen ließe und sich mit ihm unterredete, dieser ihm denn auch näher als die übrigen wäre” (90). Though Marquard is talking about those students who he has singled out, Reiser reinterprets the story to deal with his personal relationship with God. Instead of being a preacher who bestows wisdom on a listening congregation, Reiser begins to see himself as a child listening to God; and instead of conversing
with fellow human beings, he begins conversing with his heavenly father (who is depicted as much more loving than both his biological and substitutionary fathers). This identity shift prompts a transformation (he is overcome “mit einer unbeschreiblichen Wehmut” [90]) that functions like another conversion moment in the narrative. For in the act of drawing near to God, Reiser experiences a change of heart (albeit a melancholic one). Instead of seeing himself above others, he begins to sympathize for them. Thereafter, the narrative does not reference any further desire to evoke emotional responses in people, but cites how Reiser seeks to cultivate “eine solche Art von mitleidsvoller Wehmut” (91) toward others. In doing so, he resumes his role again as a religious workman, believing that this melancholic engagement can become a new type of sacrificial service to God.

This recognition of closeness to God also instills a renewed confidence. The narrative describes how, after hearing Pastor Marquard’s lesson, Reiser “glaubte sich ausschließlich mit den Vorzügen in der Gunst des Pastor Marquard beehrt” (91). His imagination is recalled and he begins to see himself “in die Stelle des glücklichen Hirten versetzte, der ruhig im Schatten seines Baums sitzen kann” (91). This imagining immediately assuages his earlier frustrations. Moreover, his current status as “ruhig” also makes him “glücklich.” Once again, it is Reiser’s turn toward God and his focus on spirituality that allows for the lifting of spirits and a renewed enjoyment of his self-cultivation. This action does not mock the religious teachers, but rather provides a kind of rebuke. Reiser proves their council wrong by immediately overlapping the two developmental models in a quantifiably effective way. In fact, this accomplishment even reinstates the promised pleasure of self that the secular model promises. Now seeing himself as a child of God and even as a shepherd (another religious symbol full of divine connotations), his vanity is flattered (“Dies war auch so schmeichelhaft für seine Eitelkeit” [90]). He sees his own
self and his work as significant – regardless of whether others do or not – and this renewed self-importance compels him to continue his professional pursuit. Reiser’s care for the soul thus helps the progression of the self. But instead of a continued interchange between these two conceits, like in the workshop earlier, the proximity to spirituality during his studies as a preacher occurs as a singular and isolated moment. He still oscillates between the spiritual and the secular in his development during this stage, but at the same time an ever-increasing gap has begun to grow. The reason stems out of his growing distance from his pietistic family and, in particular, his father. The more Reiser enters into the world with its new relations, the less control his father has over him and the greater the secular component of his self-cultivation becomes.

The final field in which Reiser pursues self-cultivation is within the theater. The time of his adolescence coincides with a significant moment in the history of German theater. The narrative states, “Es war wirklich damals gerade die glänzendste Schauspielerepoche in Deutschland, und es war kein Wunder, daß die Idee, sich in eine so glänzende Laufbahn, wie die theatricalische war, zu begeben, in den Köpfen mehrerer jungen Leute Funken schlug und ihre Phantasie erhitzte” (250). The theater is both popular and successful, causing “mehrere junge Leute,” including Reiser, to consider acting as a “glänzende Laufbahn” (250). Here again Reiser gains a new self-interest. He becomes enamored with the famous actors Johann Franz Brockmann (1745–1812), Johann Friedrich Reinecke (1745–87) and Friedrich Ludwig Schröder (1744–1816) and seeks to emulate their abilities (much in the same way that he had done earlier with Pastor Paulmann). However, this new interest marks a distinct degradation in his pursuits in that hard work (be it from either form of ‘calling’) is displaced by imitation.\footnote{This issue of imitation is also linked with Reiser’s lacking originality. On this latter point, particularly as it relates to Reiser’s experiences within the theater, see Wild, “Antitheatricality” 511–12.} In the first, Reiser
becomes obsessed again with fame and applause and constructs a paradigm in which he believes that imitating these famous actors (who are “die vortrefflichsten Muster” who “täglich Lorbeern einernten sehen” [250]) will allow him to receive the same sort of notoriety that they enjoy. The text continues: “auch war ihm nun jener Beifall aus der ersten Hand, den ein Schauspieler einernten kann, so wichtig und so lieb geworden, daß sein Hang immer mehr nach dem Theater als nach der Universität war” (250). That is, he is willing to sacrifice true self-cultivation if only to achieve self-pleasure from this effort. However, the halt of his educational studies in pursuit of an acting career poses an even greater threat to the possibility of achieving individuality via a careful crafting of the self. For no university education is now required of him: “Um diesen Endzweck zu erreichen, brauchte man nicht erst drei Jahre auf der Universität studiert zu haben” (250). The problem now facing Reiser is that he is not working hard at all; he is not pursuing any real form of ‘calling.’ He is neither exerting effort to please God nor to please the self. Rather, he is seeking to achieve fame and notoriety in a voyeuristic fashion.

Reiser finds amongst his fellow students in Hannover an immediate medium through which to begin his exercises in imitation. The time and context seem ideal. The text states, “Während daß also nun auf dem Königlichen Operntheater von der Schröderschen Gesellschaft Komödie gespielt wurde, kam auch die Zeit der Sommerferien heran, wo die Primaner jährlich öffentlich eine Komödie aufzuführen pflegten” (242). These sixth-performers are an amateur group and, since they all know each other quite well, this would theoretically be a good and safe introduction for Reiser into the world of acting. His voyeraism, however, proves immediately useless. No one gives him a part in a play. In fact they completely overlook him: “Wie sehr erstaunte er also, da er vernahm, daß man die Sache dennoch ohne ihn angefangen und sogar schon die aufzuführenden Stücke bestimmt und ihm nicht einmal eine Rolle darin zugeteilt
These sixth performers are in many ways no different from either Lobenstein or the teachers at the institute. The narrative repeatedly shows that Reiser must craft his own self, alone and without the aid of others. Not only do his acquaintances, both religious and secular, refuse to provide developmental assistance, they even at times try to hinder it. Reiser (though he should know this by now) must cultivate his own self through his own hard work. He even observes this fact within the troupe: “Er merkte freilich, daß hier ein solcher Rollenneid und ein so ängstliches Bemühren, einander denn Rang abzulaufen, stattfand, daß ein jeder genug für sich zu sorgen hatte und, wer sich nicht mit Gewalt hinzudrängte, auch nicht gerufen wurde” (242). The limited amount of roles in any given play creates a competitive atmosphere in which each individual must prove his worth over that of his fellow actor. Moreover, it is a ruthless process of “Verdrängen und wieder Verdrängtworden” (242). If Reiser does not work hard on any level, either for his self or his soul, he will have nothing to assert. To not care for either is simply to ensure that he will not be develop as an actor at all.

For a brief moment this stagnant career path is interrupted by the return of the father. His engagement with Reiser is both surprising and unusual. The narrative states, “Reisers Vater äußerte bei dieser Gelegenheit einen sehr wichtigen und wahren Gedanken, daß solche Vorfälle, wo einer sich öffentlich zu seinem Vorteil zu zeigen Gelegenheit hat […] gleichsam wie ein Sieg zu betrachten wären, den man verfolgen müsse” (251). This scene does not portray a rebuff from the stern father, but rather the offering of advice. His words, however, are not realistic to the narrative plot. Instead, they depict the extent of Reiser’s delusion. Though throughout his childhood and adolescence, Reiser has reinterpreted and reutilized his father’s religious teachings for his own developmental ideals, now he reimagines the father figure himself. For, in short, the father comes, not to return his son’s focus onto the soul, but to encourage within him a greater
attention to the self. He tells Anton Reiser even though he has already done well in displaying himself publicly, an act which he describes as a “Sieg,” a single appearance is not enough. Reiser must strive to make his public appearances continuous. No mention is given of utilizing this attention to serve God. His father’s only reasoning is “weil dergleichen im Leben sich nur selten ereigne” (251). It is a *carpe diem* moment in the text. The father argues that every advantage of the self should be sought after because pleasure is hard to achieve. He comes to embody the utilitarian slant of the evolving notion of ‘calling,’ his words mirroring a dictum that Max Weber highlights: “Seest a man active in his calling (Beruf), he shall stand before kings” (*Capitalism* 12). More than depicting Reiser’s fantasy of a new father figure, this moment also reveals the beginning of his disillusionment in the religious model of work. The theater has undoubtedly had its influence: Reiser embodies within his thought process one particular traditional notion in which spirituality and the secular world of the theater (a realm wholly distinct from passion plays and religious traveling theaters) are incompatible;³⁹ but he also internalizes this notion, not by choosing a new career path, but rather by deciding to put all efforts into following the secular model of development. This scene concludes with the father’s affirmation. In particular, he bestows a new covenant and blessing to him: “Reisers Vater schloß einen Bund mit seinem Sohne, daß sie von nun an gemeinschaftlich jenem großen Ziele der Vereinigung mit dem höchsten denkenden Wesen näher zu kommen streben wollten; worauf er ihm denn auf eben dem Fleck durch Auflegung der Hand seinen Segen erteilte” (251). This new covenant is completely void of any proximity to spirituality. Instead, the religious father now validates the son’s secular pursuits.

³⁹ Ironically, there was even a Lutheran preacher named Anton Reiser (1628–86) who initiated a vociferous attack against the Hamburg Opera House in his *Theatromania* (1681). Quoting liberally from the patristic tradition Reiser lambasted the theater as the work of the devil himself.
But it is all in vain. His resolution comes too late. Reiser is given neither the time nor opportunity to begin working for his self and, as a result, in the very next scene, he still fails to receive a part in a play. Immediately, “alle die Wünsche seines Herzens” (251), the desires of his self, are denied. Moreover, he recognizes that other opportunities have now been inhibited too. He will not be able to fulfill “sein ganzer Wunsch, […] öffentlich vor den versammelten Einwohnern seiner Vaterstadt seine Talente zu entwickeln und zeigen zu können” (252); he will not be able “solche erschütternde Empfindungen wieder bei Tausenden zu erregn, wie Reineck, der den Clavigo spielte, in ihm erregt hatte” (252); nor will he be able, as his father had commanded him, “öffentlich zu zeigen” (252) before the prince, “nebst dem ganzen Adel, die Geistlichkeit und die Gelehrten und Künstler der Stadt” (252). These three opportunities denied him are crucial components of the self, namely skill, recognition, and influence. To this is added a lack of greatness – the very characteristic that his (imagined) father had exhorted him to achieve. Reiser had wanted to imitate the famous actor, Reinecke, and, like Reinecke, he wanted to arouse certain emotions in his audience. This rejection drives him into one of his greatest bouts of depression; he is plunged into “in eine Art von wirklicher Melanchollie” (251).

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40 Reiser’s specific failure here has generated numerous interpretations from scholars. For example, Martin L. Davies argues that self-cultivation, if it was possible at all, was only possible for the literate, privileged bourgeoisie alone, a class to which Reiser did not belong (he instead was closer to the illiterate masses). But more than this, Davies argues that Reiser’s failed attempts questions the feasibility of the Enlightenment itself: “Reiser shuts himself away to pore over the philosophical works of Gottsched and Wolff. He experiences his awakening as an intellectual being. At the same time, however, the complex narrative counterpoint exposes what to Moritz seems the complacency of a belief in perfectibility and progress. What presses this criticism home is the discrepancy between Reiser’s will to think and the inadequacy of his intellectual and linguistic skills, and then too the resulting confusion and disorientation. For where the advocates of progress may prevaricate, Moritz is ready with his own experience to say how self-improvement really fares” (21–22); for an analysis on Reiser’s lack of reason and judgment, see Minter 69; on Reiser’s lacking relationship with reality, see Müller, *Autobiographie* 145 as well as Müller, *Die kranke Seele* 322, 344.

41 For a more thorough investigation of Reiser’s depression and its various symptoms in this moment and in others throughout *Anton Reiser*, see Dyck, “Melancholie” 177–79.
However, for the first time in the narrative, Reiser is unable to find a solution to his problem, for he refuses now to find proximity in his situation to spirituality. In fact, the divine is no longer a concept for him. He neither reaches out toward God nor blames him for his lack of a role in the play with the sixth-performers. Rather, he references “so mancherlei wiederwärtige Schicksale” (252). Reiser has finally undergone a complete change in worldview. He insinuates that he is alone in the world, without the aid of a divine helper, and his professional pursuits have been hampered, not by supernatural powers, but harsh social circumstances.42 His recourse as such is not to turn his attention back to the soul as he did during his times as a tradesman and preacher; he does not shift his understanding of the stage as a platform to draw close to God; nor does he begin to view the role of actor as something sacred. Instead, he begins to digress. Reiser finds himself in an in-between space: he cannot function as either a purely secular or religious workman. His only option is to draw as near as possible to the stage while the rest of the sixth-performers rehearse their play. The narrative describes how, “Als der Clavigo probiert wurde, hatte er sich in einer der Logen versteckt – und während daß Iffland als Beaumarchais auf dem Theater wütete, wütete Reiser, der in der Loge ausgestreckt am Boden lag, gegen sich selber” (253). Though Reiser does not gain the part of Clavigo, he continues to imitate the actor that did. It is not the great Reinicke, but rather a boy named Iffland who he considers “ein Dummkopf” (253). Reiser is thus willing to replace his first ideal of greatness with a kind of mediocrity. But still no cultivation of self is taking place. In fact, there are no examples during his time in the theater of any such effort. No knowledge is gained or applied and no individuality is achieved. Even worse, he begins to lose control over his body. Unlike Iffland, his raging and ranting is

42 For more on how harsh social conditions prohibit Anton’s personal development, see Kontje, “Creative Destruction” 33–50.
real. It is a part of his final attempt to gain attention ("die Erleuchtung, die Blicke unzähliger Zuschauer alle auf ihn allein hingeheftet" [253]). However, no one notices him and this lack of attention causes him to digress further into a state of self-destruction: "Und seine Raserei ging so weit, daß er sich das Gesicht mit Glasscherben, die am Boden lagen, zerschnitt und sich die Haare raufte" (253). By the end of the rehearsal, Reiser is exhausted, in pain, and struck with the notion that, without work, "nun sollte er nichts wie unter der Menge verloren ein bloßer Zuschauer sein" (253).

Karl Philipp Moritz thus sets up an interesting paradigm of self-cultivation in *Anton Reiser*. Reiser emerges into the world from a pietistic household and seeks to cultivate his self with the purpose of gaining self-pleasure from his work. However, during the inevitable occasions where his self-cultivation struggles, whether as a tradesman, a preacher, or an actor, when Reiser draws proximally close to spirituality, and in fact switches his understanding of work from serving his own self to serving God, he not only improves his work situation, but also allows for his self to develop further. Near the end of the narrative, when Reiser calls less and less upon this spiritual worldview, his self-cultivation is immediately hampered. The narrative undoubtedly calls for the cultivation of the self. However, implicit within Reiser’s process is that this secular endeavor must find overlaps (at the very least in singular moments) with religious concerns. The care for the soul, diverting attention at times from the self to God and the notion of sacred service are all vital to Reiser’s self-cultivation. When these elements are amiss, which is made most evident in his pursuit of an acting career, his self, first remains stagnant and then even digresses.

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43 For a more specific study on how enlightenment and religious concerns overlap in *Anton Reiser*, see Wild, “Antitheatricality” 508–9.
B. Angelika Rosa’s Lebensschicksale (1784/85)

There is an unprecedented cluster of eighteenth-century, middle-class German women who sought to cultivate the self based on their own efforts. These women include: Sophie Albrecht (1757–1840), Friderika Baldinger (1739–86), Marianne Ehrmann (1755–95), Philippine Engelhard née Gatterer (1756–1831), Sophie La Roche (1730–1807) and Angelika Rosa (1734–90). Ruth Dawson argues that once these women began to write, “they produced texts using and interweaving all available genres and that, taking the Enlightenment’s proclamations about shared human potential seriously, they sought in their writing to attain cultural agency typically expressed as a sense of self” (15). Specifically, these women sought to craft a female self. However, their pursuits also met with numerous obstacles; for example, access to sufficiently advanced education, the material conditions associated with marriage, the prevailing androcentric discourse on femininity, and the operations of desire (Dawson 38). In their writings, these women depict an inevitable oscillation: they are caught between their own wishes to work for the self and society’s confining versions of the female work ethic.

Angelika Rosa is an important female subject for the examination of the difference between secular and religious models of ‘calling.’ In her Lebensschicksale (1784/85), her development is guided through two, conflicting models (Vorbilder): the first (a Turkish woman) exemplifies the secular, intellectual woman in the public sphere, while the second (women in her hometown) endorse the religious, domestic woman. That is, the former encourages Angelika to work for her

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44 For information on the history of Angelika Rosa’s publication of her autobiography, from its inception in 1784/85 to its reappearance in 1908, see Roitzheim, “Rosa” 237.
self and the latter to work for God. Furthermore, in similar fashion to the pietistic model, Angelika experiences a Bußkampf as a result of these two Vorbilder, while attempting to exert agency and find a point of overlap between her models. She struggles back and forth between the two models, exploring both forms of development, until she eventually gives in to the latter and experiences a semi-conversion moment in her narrative.45

The narrative immediately begins with Rosa’s education. It states, “Als ich ein Jahr alt war, ließ mich mein Vater von der Mutter wegnehmen und gab mich nach Halle in Pension” (82). Her family sends her, at the age of one, to a boarding house because they are poor and cannot afford to care for her. However, despite these mitigating circumstances, Rosa’s educational access is quite common for women of the educated middle class. The boarding school operates as a control mechanism for their daughter. Its purpose is to allow “passive cultural consumption but hinder, among other things, women’s activie participation in literary or scholarly productivity” (Dawson 38). For Rosa, this control has a specifically religious overlay, for she is sent to a pietistic school in Halle. Her school is to theoretically provide her with a set of tools, skills and knowledges suitable for women; i.e., education for the soul. Indeed, it acts as a form of discipline in which the pedagogical instructions reform its students through a process of conversion. Its purpose is not social advancement, but rather preparation for the domestic sphere. Rosa’s parents are undoubtedly familiar with the Pietist’s educational programming and send their daughter there with the expectation that she will receive a pious education, including strategies and exercises to awaken the soul.

45 For a comparison of Angelika Rosa’s development with that of other lesser known female autobiographers, see Wagner-Egelhaaf, “Autobiografie” 53.
In Halle, however, Rosa is placed under a unique tutelage. Her tutor is not a Pietist, nor even a German, but a Turkish woman: “Diese Person war die Tochter eines berühmten türkischen Arztes” (82); and she has an exceptional history: “Sie wurde im Türkenkriege unter Kaiser Karl VI. im Jahre 1717, da sie mit ihrem Vater flüchten wollte, gefangen. Drei Jahre hatte sie schon in der Gefangenschaft gesessen, als ihr Vater in der Gefangenschaft starb. Da man auf sie nicht genau Acht gegeben, hatte sie sich Davon gemacht und war nach Frankfurt gegangen, woselbst sie, nach empfangenem christlichen Unterricht, zu Ende des Jahres 1720 öffentlich getauft wurde” (82) This Turkish woman is first kidnapped, then imprisoned, and, finally, Christianized, and her baptism presumably initiates her into German society. Her conversion experience is not uncommon. On account of the Turkish wars, German Christians (both Protestant and Catholic) had brought numerous Turkish subjects into the Holy Roman Empire, largely in order to celebrate the victorious incorporation of former Muslims into the fold and to transform Turkish slaves or prisoners of war from an object of wartime conquest (Kriegsbeute/Türkenbeute) into Christian subjects incorporated into local, social and political hierarchies. In other words, Madame Groot (the Turkish woman’s Christian name) has become an exhibition. She has been assigned the role of teacher within this pietistic boarding house with the sole purpose of teaching the girls what she has learned as a Christian. In this way, she will confirm her service to Pietism as well as uphold its beliefs.

However, Madame Groot does not conform to the Pietist’s educational program. The rigid schedule that she holds the girls to does not appear wholly in contrast: “Um 7 Uhr des Morgens im Winter, um 6 Uhr im Sommer wurden wir völlig angezogen und in das Zimmer der Madame Groot (so ließ sie sich nennen) geführt, wo der Hodmeister eine Betstunde hielt” (82). However, the variety of subjects and instructors that she exposes the girls to does stray from
traditional rubric for female, religious instruction. Madame Groot does not offer a limited instruction on the Bible and Catechisms. Rather, the text states, “Hernach wurde gefrühstückt, und dann die Lehrstunden abgewartet. Zu jeder Wissenschaft hatten wir einen besonderen Maître” (82). The phrase “zu jeder Wissenschaft” implies a wide range of subjects. Furthermore, the text implies that the girls are not being prepared for neither conversion nor domesticity, but rather for a level of intellect comparable to boys. Madame Groot is not seeking to prepare them for the private sphere, but instead for social advancement. The Lebensschicksale thus creates an immediate deviation from traditional Turkish conversion narratives.46 This Turkish teacher revolts. Not only does Madame Groot challenge the claimed Pietist hold over supposed converts, but she also reveals that her forced conversion did not successfully control (or diminish) her own personal interests. For example, the text reveals that she is self-taught in numerous languages, including German and Latin (“Sie hatte die deutsche Sprache nach Regeln gelernt und drückte sich sehr gut aus” [83]). She, as a woman, still seeks to craft her self based on scholarly intellect and she also attempts to pass on this desire to her students. The text’s response to this deviation is both innovate and provactive, for it depicts Madame Groot’s efforts in a positive light. Rosa does not express disinterest in the subjects presented to her. In fact, she even proves that she as a girl is capable of learning them.

Madame Groot continues in her deviation via her femininity. The text states, “Nun muß ich meine Pflegemutter der Person nach, so gut ich sie nur noch immer schildern kann, beschreiben. Sie war von der Größe des größten Frauenzimmers, stark, schwarzbäuerer Gesichtsfarbe und hatte krauses schwarzes Haar, da sie ungebunden hangend trug. Ihr Blick

46 For more on Turkish conversion narratives, see Friedrich, “Türken” 329–360; Quakatz, “Zu Konversion und Zwangstaufe” 417–30; Theilig, “Baptizatus est” 45–60.
erregt Furcht” (83). This Turkish woman uses her appearance and character to establish an alternate cultural-gender discourse. Instead of conforming to society’s class-inflected expectations of women’s bodies, behaviors and characters, Madame Groot again stands apart. As part of her effort to reject the Germanically-inscribed pietist codes, she remains decidedly Turkish: “Sie trug keine andere, als türkische Kleidung, welche in einem Talar und in einem türkischen Rocke bestand […]. Sie trug niemals Frauenzimmerschuhe, sondern gelbe saffiane Halbstiefel” (83). Furthermore, she still remains socially different: “Der König Friderich Wilhlem schenkte ihr in Halle ein Haus und gab ihr die Freiheit, einen Kaufladen zu errichten, welcher noch heutigen Tages der Türkenladen heißt, ingleichen, da sie in der Arzneiwissenschaft sehr erfahren war, die Freiheit zu kuriren, wenn sie wollte” (83). The king himself gives her lodgings and a shop; and not just any shop, but specifically a “Türkenladen.” The emphasis in this statement is on her “freedom,” her ability to work freely within the public sphere, the freedom to pursue her own interests, build a shop and administer medicines as she sees fit.

Finally, Madame Groot is socially active. Her main outreach in the community is serving the poor: “Sie that vielen Armen Gutes. Von armen Kranken nahm sie keine Bezahlung an” (83). She does not demand money from those she serves. Instead, she only asks for good behavior in return: “Ordnung und Reinlichkeit, Thätigkeit und Fleiß waren die Mittel, ihre Gunst zu erhalten” (83). In her approach, Madame Groot constructs a new, spiritual model of development in which the mind and body are linked. She first administers medicine to the sick and the patient in turn applies tidiness and cleanliness, activity and hard work to his or her life. Furthermore, she is not just doctor, but also judge, for she also punishes those who do not live accordingly, while rewarding those who do: “Sie bestrafte grobe Fehler sehr strenge und war unerbittlich, wenn gestraft werden mußte; hingegen war sie aber auch immer darauf bedacht, neue Belohnungen zu
erfinden für diejenigen die ihre Pflicht thaten” (83). This is the Turkish woman’s final act of defiance acts the religious model of female ‘calling.’ For “in addition to impeding women’s education and redirecting them toward marriage, the dominant versions of femininity for women of the educated middle class in eighteenth-century Germany discouraged their active participation in the cultural life of their time, a situation that many women resented and sometimes resisted” (Dawson 39). In contrast, Madame Groot, as a specifically unmarried woman, becomes socially active within the public sphere, even assigning herself roles typically limited to men.

In these roles, Madame Groot becomes for Rosa the epitome of female models, i.e., her first Vorbild. She guides her in her formative years, both teaching and modeling two important lessons to her: first, that it is possible to reject the religious model (which, according to her is based on male superiority and privilege) and, second, how hard work (when coupled with personal interests and proper educational access) can open up new possibilities for the self. Rosa, in response, thanks her teacher for providing her with her first education and the foundation for her future: “Ich werde ihr doch dereinst danken, daß sie die Schritte meiner Kindheit leitete, da ich ohne die erste Bildung, die ich durch sie erhielt, auf manchem unbequemen Wege nicht so fortgekommen wäre, wie ich wirklich fortgekommen bin. Die ersten Eindrücke der Erziehung, sie sei von welcher Art sie wolle, bleiben und verlieren sich nie ganz” (83–84). Rosa asserts that Madame Groot’s influence on her was not forced or biased. Rather, unlike the male-dominated teachings, her Turkish teacher had presented her with two paths: one is described as “bequem” and the alternative as “unbequem” (84). Rosa insinuates that she was able to choose which path she wanted to follow (thereby indicating the level of agency that she had acquired under Madame Groot’s tutelage) and that, as a result of her own free will, she has gone in the same
direction as her teacher. Rosa even insinuates that she accomplishes her goal of cultivating her self like Madame Groot, specifically as it relates to her accomplishments in music, language and science. In doing so, she takes the more uncomfortable of paths, paving new roads for women both intellectually and socially.

However, instead of enjoying social acceptance, like her teacher, Rosa stands apart when she returns to her hometown: “Nachmittags kamen eine Menge Leute und gute Freunde zu meiner Mutter, die mich sehen wollten, gleich als ob ich irgend ein Geschöpf wäre, worin sich die Natur geirrt und das man für Geld zeigt” (95). She feels as if people see her like a miscreation – not only is she something outside of the normal parameters for created woman, but she feels as if she is sub-woman, perceiving that her audience views her more like an animal at a zoo, a freak show that one pays money to see. Furthermore, these men and women see her as different not only in looks, but also in thought: “man sah mich vom Kopf bis auf die Füße, und der Mund hätte mir bersten mögen über all den Antworten, die ich auf all die Fragen, die man an mich that, geben mußte” (95). In this way, Madame Groot’s spirituality, and with it her student’s entire being, is challenged. Rosa’s knowledge is linked to her physicality (including her health); thus, when her audience questions her, they are also observing her from head to foot. They even try to break this link, believing that if they can deconstruct Rosa’s intellect, her autonomous physical body will also be undone. Her neighbors are persistent, returning daily to observe and question her: “So ging es alle Tage” (95); and Rosa only becomes more and more annoyed: “Es verdroß mich sehr” (95).

These people form a formidable challenge to Rosa’s progress in self-cultivation. The root of their argument lies in the fact that music and science (while allowable for a foreign, Turkish woman) are not appropriate spheres of knowledge for a virtuous girl: “Man ermahnte mich denn
besonders, ja in der Musika und in den Wissenschaften nicht weiter zu gehen, da es einem tungedhaften Mädchen gar nicht anstünde, so etwas zu wissen, und ein Mädchen dadurch leicht verführt werden könnte” (95). These words, spoken by her female neighbors, reiterate the pietistic model of female development. In contrast to the proper education for women (e.g., basic biblical principles), Rosa’s spheres of knowledge are denounced as heretical because they are traditionally masculine and, furthermore, like Madame Groot who becomes a shop owner, this knowledge would potentially lead to a public career. This path, they believe, is nothing less than a “trap,” or “ensnarement.” In response, these people take it upon themselves to provide Rosa with the religious instruction she never received. They push her back into the domestic sphere, by telling her: “ich sollte hübsch nähen, stricken und spinnen lernen” (95). To develop like Madame Groot, they argue further, is considered nothing less than a sin: “Ich muß hier anmerken, daß man da äußerst bigott ist und man hält es für Sünde, ein Mädchen etwas von schönen Wissenschaften lernen zu lassen” (95). In other words, they threaten Rosa, telling her that obedience to the parameters they have just outlined will be praised as virtuous and a service to God, while any attempt at digression will be detrimental to her soul.

In the midst of this debate, Rosa’s mother takes a different stance, defying the opinion of the townsfolk and encouraging her daughter in her “addiction” to music and language: “Meine Mutter hingegen begünstigte meine Neigung zur Musik und Sprachkenntnisβ, so daß sie mir nicht nur den damals berühmten Kapellmeister Fleischer hielt, sondern mir auch alle ersten dergleichen Bücher anschaffte” (95). Her mother thus represents a third category of women in the Lebensschicksale, namely those who have been forced to follow in the footsteps of the religious model of ‘calling’ (and, by extension, development) but who secretly wish for greater freedom; and, unable to work for her own self, she becomes determined to empower her
daughter in this endeavor. Her mother accomplishes this by bringing her into contact with not only a male tutor, but also more books. In this way, two people become her advocates: her mother, a traditional woman working in the domestic sphere who encourages her to have a different life than she does, and a male choir director. Angelika uses these two as her justification to defy the *Vorbild* of the virtuous woman. However, Rosa shows how, at the same time, this personal support is not enough. Indeed, she paints a bleak picture of eighteenth-century German culture: the religious model of development for women is so pervasive that those who wish to defy it can only do so in secret (or risk being condemned). The text states, “Dagegen versäumte ich keine Gelegenheit, mich in sauberen Handarbeiten zu üben, und da wenig Einkommens hatte, so lernte ich die Gold- und Silberklöppelei und verdiente damit wöchentlich zwei Gulden bis zwei Thaler. Auf diese Art arbeitete ich am Tage und halbe Nächte widmete ich den Wissenschaften” (95). To the outside world, it looks like she is doing soul care (via bobbin lace making); however, it is all a ruse for the continued work of self-cultivation. Rosa’s efforts thus provide insight into the mind of ambitious women during this time and the extent to which they were willing to work in order to craft their self in comparable measures to men.

This secretive, educational experience also awakens Rosa’s desire to a new career path. Like her own teacher, Madame Groot, she takes it upon herself to teach other girls what she has learned. Shortly after the incident in her hometown, Rosa states, “Im Anfange des vierzehnten Jahres hatte ich den Einfall, andere zu unterrichten, was ich schon eine geraume Zeit unter meinen Gespielinnen gethan hatte, unter welchen ich mich immer zur Lehrmeisterin aufwarf” (97). In no less terms, she wants to be a governess47 and, for this endeavor, she first seeks out her

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47 This was an esteemed social position that had the potential to open up future career options. Often, after acquiring work experience first as a governess, a woman could then go on to open up her own school or work at court, possibly teaching a princess.
mother’s permission, thereby looking to a female (and notably not a male) authority figure in her life for guidance: “Diese Neigung zu befriedigen, machte ich meiner Mutter bekannt, daß ich Lust hätte, in Condition zu gehen, und da eine Gräfin, die ½ Meile von Cöthen wohnte, eine Person zum Unterricht ihrer Kinder suchte, so sollte sie mir erlauben, dahin zu gehen, um mich ihr vorzustellen” (97). Her mother responds that it is not a matter of permission, but rather of courage and skill: “Meine Mutter lachte und sagte: ‘das kannst du thun, wenn du Muth und Geschicklichkeit genug dazu hast’” (97). In this statement, her mother reiterates the greater dilemma at stake: since permission will not be granted by religious authorities, Rosa requires courage to face her odds and beat them with her skills. Interestingly, though grateful for her mother’s permission, Rosa disagrees with her reasoning: “Sie hatte aber nicht geglaubt, wie sie mir nachher selbst gesagt hat, daß es mein Ernst wäre” (97). Though she has the qualifications that her mother mentions, but she argues that women have the right to a particular job simply because of their interest in it.

Nevertheless, as soon as Rosa goes to the village in question to apply for a position as a governess, she is immediately required to give her qualifications. She describes how, “Sogleich wurde ich vorgelassen, und mein Vortrag war etwa folgender: ‘Ich bin die jüngste Tochte des Superindenten R., bin von Jugend an in Pension und am Hofe gewesen’” (97). Rosa begins to outline her educational resume from birth on, highlighting the secular model of development that she has followed. She did not receive private lessons, but rather was exposed (via Madame Groot) to a wide variety of topics and was accordingly self-taught: “[Ich] habe Gelegenheit gehabt, Verschiedenes zu lernen, habe es auch durch fleißige Selbshülfe soweit gebracht, daß ich wohl glaube, im Stande zu sein, Unterricht zu ertheilen. Da ich nun gehört habe, daß Ew. Excellenz eine solche Person suchen, so habe ich mich denenselben unterthänigst vorstellen
In this statement, Rosa juxtaposes her limited educational opportunities with her great skill to prove her worth; not only does she give attention to the fact that she is hard-working ("durch fleißige Selbsthilfe"), but she also argues that it is exactly this hard work that has made her capable ("im Stande zu sein") to teach. In this way, Rosa satisfies both her mother’s and her own expectations for her job interview. She proves her skill in a courageous yet humble manner, while at the same time showing, through her own hard work, how serious she is to achieve this position.

For the countess interviewing her, however, this presentation is not enough. She demands that Rosa’s skills (and her seriousness) be tested, first in language and then in music: "Die Gräfin: ‘Unterwerfen Sie sich wohl einer kleinen Prüfung?’ Ich: ‘Mit Vergnügen, Ihr Excellenz.’ Nun wurde geklingelt, und es kame in Bedienter, dem der Befehl gegeben wurde, ein deutsches und ein französisches Buch aus des Grafen Zimmer zu holen" (97). The countess’ focus on these two skills is intriguing, not only because Rosa has not yet mentioned her qualifications, but also because governesses were typically skilled in much more, including French, painting, drawing, history and geography. In this first test of reading, the countess orders books to be taken from her husband’s study. The books used for testing are thus given a masculine label and, as such, Rosa is not only being tested for her pronunciation and knowledge of the languages in these books, but also for skills that would let her, metaphorically, enter the masculine world of the count. The countess during this scene stands as a counter-image to Rosa’s mother, doubting the woman’s ability: “Der Graf kam selbst. Die Gräfin sagt mit einer Art von Spott zu ihrem Gemahl: ‘Dies Frauenzimmerchen meldet sich zur Gouvernantenstelle bei unseren Kindern, und sie wird jetzt die Probe lesen’” (97). Rosa simply counters this mockery with an immediate proof of her abilities: “Das deutsche Buch wurde mir zuerst gegeben. Es
waren Aesops Fabeln, die ich im Französischen fast alle auswendig konnte. Ich las die erste, die mir in die Hände fiel, unwillkürlich französisch. Man erstaunte. Nun kam das französische Buch. Es waren ‘les fables de la Fontaine,’ die ich las willkürlich deutsch her. Es wurde eine allgemeine Stille?” (97). Furthermore, this moment of testing proves, once again, that Rosa is capable of reading more than those works traditionally stipulated for young woman (e.g., the Bible). The countess is amazed but she still demands that Rosa undergo similar testing with the piano. But Rosa also knows the music presented to her by heart and she automatically reproduces it in action. In these two tests, she proves to be a replica of her first Vorbild; her actions here are a variation of Madame Groot’s teachings in which a mind-body connection is evidenced. Thereafter, she is met with excessive praise and the job is granted.

It appears that Rosa has accomplished her wish: she has not only crafted her self based on her own hard work, but she has also proven its worth through testing. However, it is exactly in this moment that a new authoritiave figure enters into the Lebensschicksale to prevent the last step of her cultivation, i.e., her entrance into the public sphere. The prince himself appears suddenly to Rosa as she is on her way home: “Ehe wir aber zusammen, kam der Fürst gefahren, der um diese Zeit spazieren zu fahren pflegte” (98); and immediately he begins to inquire about her work. Rosa at first thinks that she may have another advocate for her current work situation, like the chapel director, and reveals her new job: “Das werde ich bald können […]. Ich bin engagiert bei der Gräfin von D… Eben komme ich von ihr her” (98). However, a conflict of views arises. The prince shares the same religious understanding of female ‘calling’ as the townsfolk, thereby assuming that Rosa’s engagement with the countess should be nothing more than work “als Kammerjungfer” (98). Likewise, as soon as he discovers that she is instead engaged “also Gouvernante” (98), he does not hide his disapproval. More importantly, this
moment in the *Lebensschicksale* chronicles a particular cultural development, for the prince comes to embody a new form of discipline. The boundaries for women, which were earlier restricted by religion (e.g., pietistic instruction), have now permeated to the state. The result is that the prince himself makes the executive decision to remove Rosa from this position: “Nun that er viele Fragen an mich, und endlich sagte er: ‘Nun meine Tochter, ich will für sie sorgen, darauf verlasse sie sich, und bleibe sie nur noch solange bei ihrer Mutter und gehe sie nicht nach B...dorf. Da ist indessen, wovon sie leben kann’” (99). The prince uses his power to uphold traditional gender relations, forcing Rosa to go back to the domestic sphere and her lace-making craft. Then, in his mind, having brought everything back into balance, he promptly leaves (“Hier stand er auf und damit wieder in den Wagen” [99]).

The prince’s denial initiates a real inner struggle (like a *Bußkampf* in a pietistic confession) for Rosa. She states, “Ich war wie vom Donner gerührt, daß mein schöner Plan, mein Lieblingsgeschäft so durchkreuzt werden sollte, und ging mit betrübtem Herzen weiter” (99). In her description of feeling “disappointed,” she makes it clear that she is returning back to the home while still “afflicted.” Initially, her emotional state contrasts with that of her mother, who is thrilled that her daughter talked with the prince: “Meine Mutter hatte sich seitwärts zurückgezogen, da sie sah, daß ich mit dem Fürsten zu reden hatte. Auf einmal stand sie vor mir: ‘Ei wie so tiefinsinnig, du solltest ja recht freudig sein, hast ja mit dem Fürsten gesprochen’” (99). Rosa then explains how she received this “honor” at great cost: “Ach liebe Mama, der böse Fürst will nicht, daß ich nach B... gehen soll” (99). This is why she refuses to be “freudig.” Her true joy is in autonomy, not submission; she wants to pursue her own interests, not the interests of another man, even if that means a lower social position (i.e., not being “honored” with a conversation with the prince). Rosa also supplies her mother with a further piece of their
interaction (or, better put, transaction): “Wie wir nach Hause kamen, zeigte ich ihr das Geld. Sie öffnete das Röllchen, und es waren 10 Louisd’or darinnen” (99). The prince concluded his conversation with a monetary gift. His coins reveal both his anxiety and his reaffirmation of power. He buys her freedom because he is worried she will not be intellectually convinced (just as her predecessor, Madame Groot, was not either in her experience of conversion). The transaction is effective. Rosa, though still “disappointed,” accepts the masculinely-enforced religious discourse. She gives up her progress in self and her resolution is marked by going to bed (“Es wurde wenig gesprochen, und wir gingen bald zu Bette” [99]).

A new epoch in Rosa’s life then begins: “Da fängt sich nun eine neue Epoche meines Lebens an” (103). In particular she gives in to the material conditions associated with marriage. The beginning of her ninth letter states, “[Die Capelle] wurde durch acht junge Musici verstärkt, worunter auch der war, der in der Folge mein Mann wurde” (103); and, shortly after meeting, this man (Kirchner) proposes: “Er war kaum 4 Wochen im Dienste, als er durch sein gefälliges Betragen gegen mich seine Absicht äußerte. Es dauerte nicht lange, so eröffnete er’s mir, da wir im Übungsconcert waren, was er auf dem Herzen hatte” (103). Rosa’s acceptance reveals the extent of her resignation. It chronicles her shifting alliance from her first Vorbild to her second in that marriage, for her, symbolizes the institutions of both church (the townsfolk) and state (the prince). Furthermore, it provides the proof of her turn back to the religious model, for marriage is understood “as the principal patriarchal institution for male control” (Dawson 39), not only over female sexuality and reproduction, but over the entire female self. That is, she allows the supposedly pietistic notion of femininity and female ‘calling’ to triumph. After all the hard work that she exerted to become the woman she is, she now becomes content to working for another (her husband). Her only reprieve is that she will do this begrudgingly. Even after accepting
Kirchner’s proposal, Rosa cannot fully relinquish her desire for intellectual progression and a position within the public sphere. Unfortunately, she recognizes that because of this tension marriage will become her life’s “Hauptleidenschaft” (103).

The marriage ceremony itself marks the extent of her decision’s repercussions. It begins with Rosa and Kirchner forced to postpone their marriage until the prince gives them permission. This delay signifies a double loss of control for her – not only has she been forced to give up her self to serve her husband, but even this (the when, where and how of her marriage) is regulated by another, external male voice. The prince creates several delays and, when he finally does give permission, the marriage is forced upon them suddenly and without delay: “Sogleich ging auch die Hausthür auf, und ebenso eilig trat der Hofprediger […] und überreichten mir einen eigenhändigen Befehl des Fürsten, mich sogleich mit meinem Bräutigam trauen zu lassen […]. Der Hofprediger antwortete, der Befehl könnte nicht aufgeschoben werden, und der Kammerdiener dürfte nicht eher wieder zurückkommen, bis er von ihm, der die Trauung verrichtet, ein schriftliches Zeugnis unserer Vereinigung mit sich brächte” (105). This suddenness is in part because of the prince’s jealousy of Kirchner and in part because of his desire to marry Rosa himself, and he attempts (with some success) to rob her of joy throughout this marriage process. For example, she cannot even get properly dressed: “Es wurde uns keine Zeit gelassen, uns anders anzukleiden; sondern der Zug ging fort ohne Hochzeitskeid, ohne Frisur und Brautkrone, denn daran war noch nicht gedacht” (105). Like a confusing dream (“Alles war wie ein verworrener Traum” [105]), things happen to Rosa in inexplicable and uncontrollable fashion. Before she even knows what is happening, she is brought to her husband (“In einigen Minuten waren wir da” [105]) and transformed from a girl into a woman (“Da war am 24. Januar 1751 Abends um 8 Uhr, da ich in einigen Minuten Mädchen war und Weib
wurde” [106]). The ceremony thus concludes like a conversion moment in the narrative. However, what she undergoes is more of a digression than a development. Instead of gaining individuality, she loses it. Instead of living based on her own unique mode of thought, her intellect has now come under the control of an outside force, namely marriage and, by extension, her husband.

Rosa tries a few times to reenter into the public sphere as an educator, but each time is unsuccessful and she is pulled back into the home. She is never able to do both (i.e., work for her self and work for God) simultaneously. She is initially able to cultivate her self and enter into a public career as a governess (following in the model of Madame Groot), but only before these attempts are thwarted by first family and later social leaders, who force her to serve God instead by working at home. The Vorbilder in the Lebensschicksale thus serve as physical embodiments of the notion of working for God and for one’s own self and how these notions inevitably stand in contrast to each other. Their presence in particular shows a distinct understanding of what serving God meant for women during the late eighteenth century – the parameters are stipulated by men and are in place to serve men, whereas working for the self in this text would mean that Rosa would have had opportunity to gain agency and autonomy as a woman. More importantly, it also reveals how even the most ambitious of women were unable to challenge the religious model of ‘calling’ despite their best efforts (depicted in this text through the townsfolk and, in particular, by the prince). The only woman, by contrast, who is able to focus on her self and eventually work in the public sphere is the outsider (the Turkish foreigner), who, while having been baptized into the Protestant faith, is not held to the same rules and restrictions as native German women like Rosa.
C. The Problem of the Middle Class

The autobiographical writings of Anton Reiser and Angelika Rosa’s *Lebensschicksale* are both novels of failure. Each explore different developmental models – proximally close or distant to its religious predecessor – that break down. Though Reiser seeks to find an overlap between the two, he cannot sustain it. While he initially cultivates the self and, in moments where this fails, he returns to soul work, he eventually rejects spirituality and quickly thereafter his self digresses. Rosa, on the other hand, crafts her self in direct opposition to the soul; but, despite her best efforts, her existence as an intellectual woman is denied recognition from representatives of both the church and state. The result is that neither can achieve their professional goals – Reiser does not succeed as a hat maker, pastor or actor, and Rosa is unable to attain a permanent position as an educator in the public sphere.

The problem inherent in both these writings is specifically middle-class. This demographic was still struggling to constitute its identity during the eighteenth century. It had just begun to rise out of the feudal order; it was gaining independence from both the church and state; and it was also entering into the public sphere. Its search for objectivity was initiated by its detachment from its earlier stratified systems (e.g., class, gender, race, education etc.) and enabled by its own growing flexibility and resources. The result was that men and women (like Reiser and Rosa) were able to know and engage with existing theoretical developmental models (religious and secular) and experiment with various overlaps between them. This situation reveals multiple instabilities of the time: first, the middle class did not yet know how to develop; second, both theoretical models are in flux (the religious is declining and the secular is yet to be established); third, the middle class engagement with these models does not produce concrete
identities, but rather experiments thereof. Reiser and Rosa embody these instabilities in their narratives. Neither have a concrete plan for how to cultivate the self. Rather, they both pick and choose from the models presented to them and seek to craft a self that seems best to them.

The problem of the middle class directly influences two specific areas: religious and culturally-stipulated intellectual capacities as well as uses of work. For Reiser, multiple fields of study are available to him – the very fact that he can entertain careers as a tradesman, preacher and actor (which are all vastly different professions) reveals the breadth of opportunities available to him as a middle-class man. Furthermore, he has free access to the literature in these various fields, be it the Bible and theological texts or plays written by Goethe, and he can study and apply the ideas that he learns in these texts to his self as he sees fit. He does experience hindrances at times to his studies, but these are in no way social restrictions (at least not to the same degree as for Rosa). Reiser at times struggles in his spheres of knowledge because he does not have enough money and because of the personal experiences surrounding his studies (for example, when he is physically taxed or he receives limited praise for his work). He is also not a hard worker. In fact, it is often because of his laziness that he is forced to turn back to spirituality. Emotions and imagination (two realms largely encoded as feminine) have to be utilized where physical strength and mental determination are lacking. It is a completely narcissistic problem in which his self is only to blame. The narrative thus draws a strict line between the unselfish love of the self and narcissistic self-love. Reiser’s imagination leads more to self-indulgence than appropriate avenues for self-recognition and, ultimately, it is his (femininely-encoded) imagination that counteracts his educational efforts. Within his efforts to craft a middle-class self, vanity becomes a hindrance.
Rosa, conversely, is hampered by her specific career path. Unlike Reiser, she does not experience hindrances in her intellectual development. Madame Groot provides access to various forms of knowledge, including science, economics and languages and Rosa effortlessly follows her Turkish educator, applying these knowledges to her self and becoming in turn an intellectual woman. Her point of contention comes in the application of her intellect. It is when she seeks a position as a governess that the prince himself forces her back into the confines of the home. It is not necessarily that the path of governess is unavailable to middle-clas women. Rather, it is the notion of female work for personal gain that is negatively depicted (at least from the perspective of her townsfolk and the prince). Not only are Rosa’s attempts to work for her own self completely unconventional (making her more comparable to a foreigner than a native German), but, more significantly, they are undesired as they appear antagonistic to her expected role as wife and mother within the home. But, at the same time, the text does not assume that Rosa is destined for the home. For domestic development appears to be just as conspicuous: knitting alone is not even a real form of spiritual knowledge and the question of how this practice would prompt development is unclear.

Moritz’s Anton Reiser and Rosa’s Lebensschicksale thus function as novels of exemplarity. Their fractured models act as cautions for their middle-class readers. That is, they act as a form of literary check list, cataloging those developmental elements that were either helpful or hindering. Their aim is simple: for later novels to drafts new models based in contrast to what is depicted here. Interestingly, within these examples, the question of spirituality is left open-ended. Neither writings necessarily critique its use or whether one should be proximally close or distant to it. They simply leave room for new approaches in the hope that eventually a model will arise that appropriately aligns with middle-class notions of ‘calling.'
IV. CHAPTER THREE:

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUL IN THE CONFESSIONAL:

CRAFTING THE WORLDLY SELF IN JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE’S
“BEKENNTNISSE EINER SCHÖHEN SEELE” (1795/96) AND FRIEDERIKE HELENE
UNGER’S BEKENNTNISSE EINER SCHÖHEN SEELE VON IHR SELBST
GESCHRIEBEN (1806)

In 1733, Johann Christoph Gottsched composed a handbook entitled Erste Gründe der
Gesammten Weltweisheit, in which he delineated a new moral philosophy. It argued that the
whole of society – women as well as men – should embrace rational ways of thinking and living
and that, through the development of reason, morality would naturally manifest itself. By
morality, he meant a condition regulated by the “Gesetz der Natur.” Gottsched said that it is
irrelevant whether or not God exists, for the law of nature determines whether human actions are
good or evil, thus binding even atheists to the moral law (Potter 24). He stated, “Das Gesetz der
Natur ist endlich auch einerley mit demjenigen, was einem die gesunde Vernunft giebt, oder was
sie lehret… Aus diesem allen erhellet nun: daß auch die Gottesläugner selbst ein Gesetz der
Natur erkennen müssen” (AW 5.2: 89). Reason, he argued, enables people to recognize the law
of nature (i.e., to determine vice and virtue) and to act in accordance with it (Potter 24): “Blöβ
vermittelst der Vernunft, muß man ja die Beschaffenheit aller Handlungen einsehen, und aus
ihren Folgerungen schließen, ob sie gut oder böse sind” (AW 5.2: 89). Gottsched thus
consolidated a secular morality that emphasizes the individual and his or her intellect over and
above the authority of both God and the church.
This new moral philosophy found its representation in fiction. In fact, Christian Friedrich von Blanckenburg called for a morality of character in eighteenth-century theory of the novel. In *Versuch über den Roman* (1774), Blanckenburg establishes a twofold purpose for the novel. First, he defines it as the modern epic narrative which focuses on the self-development of an individual. He uses Christoph Martin Wieland’s *Geschichte des Agathon* (1766–67) as his model. In it, the hero undergoes a process of development for which the inner self is paramount; the cause and effect relations in this development must be stipulated; and, finally, the hero resolves the conflicts encountered during self-development in order to further his own relationship with his inner self (Rinere 159). For Blanckenburg, the greater the cultivation of self, the more moral the protagonist becomes. Second, Blanckenburg assigns the novel a didactic function. That is, the protagonist instructs (or induces introspection within) the readers on his or her own moral character. He implies the necessity of creating a relationship between the reader and the protagonist based on *mitverstehen* and *mitleiden* (Rinere 157). It is not that the reader undergoes an experiential identification with the main character but rather his or her cognitive process is stimulated from a conscious understanding of this character’s thoughts and actions. The result is that readers of the novel will begin their own processes of self-development and, in so doing, craft their own moral character.

Wieland’s *Agathon*, however, is not the only fictional representation available for this new moral philosophy. Nor is this representation limited to strictly male protagonists. This chapter considers how two fictional women – the beautiful soul in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s Book VI “Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele” in his novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795/96) and Mirabella in Friederike Helene Unger’s novel *Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele von ihr selbst*

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48 Henceforth cited as “Bekenntnisse.”
Goethe’s beautiful soul and Mirabella seek to craft their self through spiritual exercises. That is, through the books they read; through the various modes of thought that they collect from them; and the ways in which they apply these thoughts to their own selves. Nevertheless, within this approach, both women take different turns. This chapter first considers the process of self-cultivation for Goethe’s beautiful soul (I). It gives primary consideration to her embrace of religion for the sake of individuation as well as her misuse of religion which ultimately leads to a deprived self and a lacking moral character. The chapter then turns to Mirabella’s response (II). For she, in direct contrast to the former, rejects the Bible in favor of global literature as a basis for her self-cultivation. Furthermore, not only does Mirabella achieve moral individualization, she then proves its sustainability through various testings at court. The significance of both narratives stems from their continued use of the conventions and forms of a traditional pietist confession (III). Not only do both Goethe’s “Bekenntnisse” and Unger’s *Bekenntnisse* respectively establish structural and rhetorical continuities with this earlier genre, but they also share in its didactic nature. In so doing these fictional autobiographies come to serve as a modern reinvention of the conversion narrative.

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49 Henceforth cited as *Bekenntnisse*. 
A. Goethe’s Book VI “Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele” in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795/96)

Book VI, the “Bekenntnisse,” stands out from the rest of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* in terms of its stylistic features, its subject matter, and its positioning in the narrative. Fashioned as a confession in the midst of a *Bildungsroman*, this manuscript describes the supposed development of an unnamed woman (simply termed “the beautiful soul”) from birth to near-death. The introduction of her manuscript is also abrupt. It is provided to a sick woman named Aurelie by a physician almost without warning at the end of Book V to console her, but it is read to her by the main protagonist of the novel, Wilhelm Meister, and appears to have a greater effect on the latter. Up to this point, Meister had been floundering in life, giving very little attention to his own self and its development, even though he had recently bemoaned to a friend that he wished to educate himself: “Daß ich dir’s mit Einem Worte sage, mich selbst, ganz wie ich da bin, auszubilden, das war dunkel von Jugend auf mein Wunsch und meine Absicht. Noch hege ich eben diese Gesinnungen, nur daß mir die Mittel, die mir es möglich machen werden, etwas deutlicher sind” (FA 9: 657). The manuscript seems to come as an answer to Meister’s wish. After reading it, he finds his path, leaving his theatrical career and seeking to become a useful citizen within society while also entering into a secretive organization called the *Turmgesellschaft*. In this trajectory, the confessions serves as a turning point in the overall novel and as a momentary suspension for eighteenth-century discourses on self-cultivation. The positioning at or near the center of the novel underlines the weight that this book carries.

While its crucial commentary on the novel’s central premise, namely self-development, has already been recognized, there is very little agreement to the exact form that this self-
development takes. Some argue that the character of the beautiful soul is based on a pietist woman named Susanne von Klettenberg, a friend of Goethe as well as his mother (Brandes, Prokop) and that Goethe’s inclusion of this historical woman’s life in his novel is indicative of his hidden interest in conversion narratives. There are, on the one hand, numerous Freudian readings, in which this story is read as a sexual awakening complete with pre-Oedipal sexual bonds and feminine eroticism (Eissler, Helfer, Kittler, Kowalik and Per Ohrgaard). But, at the same time, there are some within traditional criticism that claim that the beautiful soul is actually a neurotic woman, afraid of adulthood and sexuality, who therefore does not develop at all (Beharriell). More recently, feminist scholarship has argued that the heroine’s spiritual withdrawal into herself is not neurotic but rather a retreat to a sphere free from the dominant patriarchal society in which she lives and which in fact is trying to repress her desire to develop emotionally (Hirsch). Furthermore these feminist readings argue that, through her withdrawal, the beautiful soul opens up new possibilities for development, possibilities that had previously only been available to men (Eldridge, Zantop).

The complexity within this debate is due to the unique fusions of religious and secular thought at work within the discussion on development within the “Bekenntnisse.” Indeed, within this narrative, both traditional and more modern concepts converge. The beautiful soul’s parents, for example, encourage her to engage in intensive readings of both religious (the Bible) and secular texts (from studies on anatomy to fairy tales). Through these readings, she gains a variety of examples from which to follow, ranging from a lamb, a typical religious metaphor of the Christ figure, to Hercules. The former encourages within her notions of passivity, while the latter provides her with a heroic model of agency and adventure. These images are both contrasted and conflated within the narrative of the “Bekenntnisse” as the beautiful soul oscillates between the
court and a secluded Moravian community; although, significantly, she eventually rejects both modes of living and chooses to spend the latter part of her life in seclusion. Furthermore, throughout these various experiences in her life, the explicit references to the soul mixed with implicit nods to the self seemingly render it impossible to determine which part of her is in fact undergoing transformation. Her autobiography thence concludes abstractly: she claims to have become a superiorly, moral women with a unique connection to the divine, yet at the same time she does not fulfill any of the traditional, moral expectations of her time, negating any role as a parishioner, family member or wife.

This section seeks to shed a new light on this debate by arguing that, in light of these fusions, the development of the beautiful soul is much more nuanced. It considers how a seemingly religious woman can still gain the heralded virtues of pietism, namely morality, while rejecting the path of transformation through divine conversion and by instead pursuing a more secular form of development. As opposed to becoming moral according to pre-defined institutional definitions, the beautiful soul is supposed to exercise her own spiritual practices in order to create first her own new way of moral thinking and then behavior in order to embody a modern, yet spiritual individual. Furthermore, the hybrid nature of this developmental model allows for conceptual, rhetorical and structural continuities between the earlier pietist confession and Goethe’s “Bekenntnisse;” in particular, the discussion on mind-body dualism in which the beautiful soul’s thinking (i.e., her own image of her self) and her behavior (i.e., the form of her self) are supposed to be linked.50 But it is here that the beautiful soul fails - not on account of her

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50 Furthermore, Stefan Fleischer highlights how the story of the beautiful soul is temporally organized with the past being treated as a succession of events which prefigure the narrator’s conversion and hence present state of being (809). This temporal chronology follows the pattern of spiritual autobiographies of Augustine and Wordsworth; III-Jun Soo also comments on the beautiful soul’s narrative affinity to Augustine when he states, “Ihre Bildungsgeschichte ist eine Geschichte des im Sinne der Gnadenlehre Augustinus’ wachsende Glaubens, aber eine Geschichte der Fehlentwicklung im Sinne des Goetheschen Begriffs der Tätigkeit al seines Mittels für die
reliance on religion, but rather because of her, first, solipsistic and then, second, selective approach to religious texts. The result is an ineffable representation of her self, which leads to nothing more than a unique form of moral narcissism expressed in dilettantish fashion. That is, her imagined moral self becomes incapable of having an aesthetic arrangement in the world. In this way, her story becomes both exemplary as well as a warning of the potential pitfalls within this new model of self-cultivation.

In the frame of the “Bekenntnisse,” Goethe sets in motion a transition from the pietist soul to a new and specific preoccupation with the self. This he employs through various rhetorical slippages. For example, as a child in her sick bed, the beautiful soul’s relationship to God (mostly referred to as “das unsichtbare Wesen” [FA 9: 729] or “das Unsichtbare” [FA 9: 730]) is a code for her relationship to her own self. Thus when she claims that she is able to vividly converse with “the Invisible Power,” she is doing nothing more than talking to her self. Within this new preoccupation, her attitude toward her own self is supposed to be religiously rooted, while secularly expressed. That is, that like the Pietist who examines the state of his soul in order to identify its various sins and then correct them, the beautiful soul is to have an intense relation to her self, seeing it, not so much as a faulty object that needs to be corrected, but rather as a blank object that needs to be crafted. This, however, the beautiful soul overlooks, which is evident at the beginning of her confessions when she states, “aber nie fiel es mir ein zu denken, wahre Religiosität. Denn für den absoluten Glauben an die Gnade Gottes muß man auf jede Art des Vertrauens zum selbständigen Vermögen des Menschen verzichten, und dies muß nun die für die reine Sichhingebung an Gott benötigte Isolierung von der Außenwelt und den Verlust der Fähigkeit zur weiteren Sich-Bildung zur Folge haben, die Goethe zufolge nur durch die dynamische Wechselwirkung zwischen Innen und Außen ermöglicht wird” (255).

51 Marianne Hirsch also sees the connection between the beautiful soul’s references to God and to her own self. She argues, “The beautiful soul’s inwardness to an extreme self-absorption, to an inability to care for others frightens those around her. Ironically, she herself has become a ‘Narcissus,’ forced into extreme self-involvement by the selflessness that is demanded of women. The god she worships is in large measure her own imaginative creation, her ‘absent lover’ and ‘invisible friend,’ the occasion to savor her ‘exhilarating feelings’ and the outlet for her inclination toward the invisible” (Spiritual Bildung 31).
wie es denn mit mir stehe, ob meine Seele auch so gestaltet sei, ob sie einem Spiegel gleiche, von dem die ewige Sonne wider glänzen könnte, das hatte ich ein vor allemal schon vorausgesetzt” (FA 9: 731). The beautiful soul (unknowingly) admits to a lack of introspection. But interestingly she justifies this lack, including an absence of a modality, a constancy and an exactitude of required vigilance over her self, by claiming to in fact have a self that is already crafted. Arguably her statement here is meant as an authorial critique. While there has been a reorientation of her preoccupations, namely from the soul to the self, she does not have a proper accompanying attitude toward it.

The beautiful soul’s improper attitude toward her own self proves problematic for her development, for, as such, she misunderstands entirely the new program of self-cultivation with its spiritual practices that are set out for her by her parents. The beautiful soul’s parents act as the first of many authorial voices in the “Bekenntnisse” (culminating later with her uncle) as they introduce to her the spiritual practice of reading. They collectively provide her with comprehensive reading material – both religious and secular in nature – from which she is to, first, subjectively choose certain truths, then fashion her own self through these truths and, in so doing, be transformed by them. In this instruction, the beautiful soul’s parents outline precisely the morality of character that Gottsched and Blanckenburg call for. This comprehensive study is provided for the sole purpose of individuation. Instead of relying on theologians (or naturalists) to tell her what virtuous behavior is, the beautiful soul need only develop her own rational thought and act in accordance with it. The end result, as her uncle also tells her, would be to have both “deutliche Erkenntnis” (FA 9: 781) and “rechte Ordnung” (FA 9: 781). Her parents’ goal, a lá Gottsched, is– by means of the natural use of reason – “die vernünftigen Einwohner der Welt zu rechten Menschen zu Machen” (AW 5.2: 156). Thus, when her mother insists that her Bible
should be read with equal diligence, it is not because she is elevating those virtues found in religious instruction, but rather so that the beautiful soul’s reading of romance novels, which she prefers, can be put into balance.

The beautiful soul, however, as mentioned above, believes that her self is already crafted and, in particular, in a moral fashion. This causes her, instead of turning reading into a labor, to simply find in the virtuous images of the books she reads representations of her supposed pre-existing morality. For example, the beautiful soul believes that Valiska in the *Christliche deutsche Herkules* is “ganz nach meinem Sinne” (FA 9: 730), even though she never mentions what “her way,” i.e., what her personal form of morality, actually is. This comparison is made ironically (once again unbeknownst to the beautiful soul) in that Valiska is a kind of angelic woman with superhuman virtue. Not only is she guided by reason but her passions are always controlled and, in comparison to such a woman, the beautiful soul and her imagined virtues, whatever they may be, pale considerably. An immediate dichotomy becomes apparent between Gottsched’s stipulations for self-cultivation and the beautiful soul’s turn against them. But, even worse, she indulges in those areas he designated as particularly dangerous to morality: the senses and the imagination. On this subject, Gottsched states, “Nichts fällt uns, in Ausübung des Guten und Unterlassung des Bösen, so hinderlich, als die Sinne und die Einbildungskraft” (AW 5.2: 116). For him, imagination and the senses are dangers to self-cultivation (and hence morality) because they arouse sensual pleasure and allow one’s reason to grow cold (Potter 25). In order for the beautiful soul to craft a moral self, she must turn back to her parents’ reading list and, through it, master her own sensuality, senses and emotions. This, however, she does not do. The
beautiful soul continues in her solipsistic approach to reading thereby allowing a growing gap between subject and object.\textsuperscript{52}

Interestingly, the beautiful soul does verbalize her desire to become acquainted with her inner self (which she calls “die Seele”). Her approach, however, leads her in a different direction, for she turns to religion alone for her individuation. Early in the “Bekenntnisse,” she states, “Ich wußte aus Erfahrungen, die ich ungesucht erlangt hatte, daß es höhere Empfindungen gebe, die uns ein Vergnügen wahrhaftig gewährten . . . und daß in diesen höhern Freuden zugleich ein geheimer Schatz zur Stärkung im Unglück aufbewahrt sei (FA 7: 749). In speaking of “loftier emotions” and “higher joys,” she refers to her desire to pursue a pure and inner existence, which she believes Pietism (specifically its Moravian subset) can afford. The beautiful soul’s discourse here seems, on first reading, to harken back to the letters of Goethe’s acquaintance, Susanne von Klettenberg, and the pietistic model of conversion. This latter model focuses on the transformation of the soul and the relationship that a person then establishes with the spiritual realm as a result of his or her conversion. This is, of course, a viable but distinctly different model for development than that stipulated by Gottsched. The beautiful soul provides a singular moment of recognition, highlighting the incompatibility of these two paths: “Hier konnte kein Mittelweg gehalten werden, ich mußte entweder die reizenden Vergnügen oder die erquickenden innerlichen Empfindungen entbehren” (FA 9: 750). However, in the end, the beautiful soul does not choose either model. Rather, she misappropriates and misuses the pietistic model to serve her own purposes. In her quest for authentic self-possession, the beautiful

\textsuperscript{52} See Fleischer, “Figural Representations” 807; on the beautiful soul’s solipsism, Robert E. Norton also argues, “By emptying Bildung of its ethical significance and thus concentrating solely on what amounts to the predominantly aesthetic act of molding the materials of personality into a pleasant, continuous design, the original impetus behind the desire for acquiring a beautiful soul could, at its worst, degenerate into the effete and sterile pursuit of solipsistic self-gratification” (251).
soul turns too intensively inwards, focusing solely on the cultivation of certain “emotions” and “joys.”

This extreme emotional turn is evident in her choice, as an adult, to limit her personal readings to one text – the Ebersdorf Hymn-Book (“das Ebersdorfer Gesangbuch”) – which is part of a collection of pietistic writings that she discovers in Count Zinzendorf’s library. This hymn book is an interesting choice of reading material for two reasons. First, in this limitation, the beautiful soul excludes herself from reading the rest of the variety of pietistic writings that were available to her, thereby no longer engaging in the spiritual practice of comprehensive reading taught to her by her parents. Second, the beautiful soul’s replacement of the Bible with a hymnal, as opposed to reading the two in tandem, points back to her extreme self-preoccupation. For, while the Bible was generally considered a medium for moral cultivation, emphasizing the accumulation of moral thought, hymn books, on the other hand, were used simply for emotional expression, and, since the beautiful soul has already made clear that she does not need to learn new moral truths, she chooses instead to utilize certain hymns in order to express how she morally feels. She states, “In dem völligen Mangel aller äußeren Ermunterungsmittel ergriff ich wie von ungefähr das gedachte Gesangbuch und fand zu meinem Erstaunen wirklich Lieder darin, die freilich unter sehr seltsamen Formen, auf dasjenige zu deuten schienen, was ich fühlte” (FA 9: 769). Here then her moral narcissism expands, for the beautiful soul progresses from looking at herself through the various texts that she read as a child to now using the Ebersdorf Hymn-Book to literally sing praises to her self. They provide for her a musical form of emotional expression of her pre-existing morality. However, while she talks about the originality and simplicity of the hymn book’s expressions, she never mentions an example of what these expressions are. There is not a single reference to a specific hymn in the “Bekenntnisse.” The
only things that the beautiful soul does mention are terms such as her “Geschichte” (FA 9: 768), her “eigene Empfindungen” (FA 9: 768) and her “Gedächtnis” (FA 9: 768), thereby relegating the virtues in these hymns to abstract concepts, which quite aptly reflects upon the abstractness of her own moral self.

Nevertheless, in her own mind, the beautiful soul believes that her self is progressing, even to the point of achieving a unique form of individuality. This occurs in the moment that she considers the various images of morality that she has read and decides, quite subjectively, that not only does she embody all of these images, but in fact is somehow superior to them. The result is that she rejects reading and the studying of images altogether and she even comes to believe that the continued practice of such would be detrimental to her newly established identity. She states, “Nun hatte ich aber seit jenem großen Augenblicke Flügel bekommen. Ich konnte mich über das was mich vorher bedrohte aufschwingen, wie ein Vogel singend über den schnellsten Strom ohne Mühe fliegt, vor welchem das Hündchen ängstlich bellend stehen bleibt” (FA 9: 767). In this description, the beautiful soul sees her self as a bird (“ein Vogel”) flying away from a barking dog (“das Hündchen”) and, through these simple and natural images, she metaphorically flees from a tangible existence, which seemingly threatens to destroy her, in order to exist in suspension in the sky (“über den schnellsten Strom”). Susanne Zantop also considers this moment, arguing that the beautiful soul’s suspension in the sky points to her elevation, i.e., her superiority albeit imagined, over any kind of moral convention, be it grounded in the familial, the social or the religious (Eignes Selbst 76). Significantly, this moment of moral superiority over all images – religious and secular – is described as the beautiful soul’s

53 For further analysis on the unusualness of the beautiful soul’s language here, see Fleischer, “Figural Representations” 811.
But arguably this non-bodily, suspended self, which supposedly exists within a new form, morally superior to all others, has become completely ineffable. The beautiful soul claims that she has achieved a superiorly, moral self. However, her vision of her self is inexpressible because, in rejecting books, she has also rejected moral vocabulary, and thus, when speaking of her self, she can only express it by analogy, such as a bird in flight. In this way, her claim is made utterly ridiculous. While the beautiful soul is, in a way, aligning herself with Gottsched’s stipulated development of the modern individual, namely to become someone different from the throngs by gaining her own way of thinking, this endeavor was supposed to be done by a new and subjective collection of thoughts, not the absence of thought altogether.

The ineffability of the beautiful soul’s claimed conversion is then followed by a lacking aesthetic arrangement. Instead of this moment being followed by categorical evidence of her moral state within society, it initiates her complete withdrawal from it. Her impetus is based on the notion that there are no morally, like-minded people to be found. This includes her fellow Pietist friends, of whom she states, “Ich war nicht so eingenommen, daß ich nicht bemerkt hätte, wie nur wenige den Sinn der zarten Worte und Ausdrücke fühlten, und wie sie dadurch auch nicht mehr, als ehemals durch die kirchlich symbolische Sprache, gefördert waren” (FA 9: 772). The words and emblems she references here are those images that she herself correlates to her own morally, superior state (specifically, the flying bird); and her critique of the Pietists is that they do not relate to these images in the same way that she does. While the beautiful soul

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54 Ill-Sun Joo provides a unique perspective on this “spiritual conversion.” He states, “Am Anfang ihrer Bekenntnisse schreibt die Verfasserin über ihre schwächliche, anfällige Gesundheit, die ihr eine erhöhte Aufmerksamkeit für das seelische Befinden erzwungen und gleichsam die Tür zu einem verinnerlichten, also spirituellen Leben aufgestoßen zu haben scheint. Die hier berichtete neunmonatige Krankheit fungiert für sie als eine spirituelle Neugeburt, die den ‘Grund zu [ihrer] ganzen Denkart gelegt’ hat” (728); Marianne Hirsch, conversely, describes this moment as a move toward complete inwardness: “this confession demonstrate the dangers of being locked into one- absolute inwardness, eternal potentiality, and total “disponibilite,” unlimited by the constraints of everyday experience” (Spiritual Bildung 33).
believes that such a morally, superior state as hers must be felt to a certain degree, the Pietists by contrast do not find their moral completeness in “symbolic language,” but rather (historically-speaking) in concrete, theological truths. This difference of relatability creates an immediate communicational impasse. The beautiful soul voices her frustration: “Denn von solchen Empfindungen und Gegenständen mich selbst mit wohlwollenden Menschen zu unterhalten, war mir schon verdrießlich, wenn sie den tiefsten Sinn nicht fassen konnten, und nur auf der Oberfläche verweilten” (FA 9: 772). Her conclusion is to no longer communicate with them (or for that matter anyone) on the topic of morality, let alone live out her moral self in their presence. This choice inadvertently denies another potential spiritual practice: communication with others. This exercise exists as both a test and a guide, for not only is it necessary for the beautiful soul to reveal her own spiritual state via correspondence in order for her immutability to be proven, but she must also allow this medium to exist in order to give advice (specifically on morality) to anyone within the community who solicits it. Her removal from society by contrast prevents anyone from seeing or hearing proof of her cultivated state. The only evidence of her morality simply remains her claim to it.

The “Bekenntnisse,” however, does not allow the beautiful soul’s true, inner state to remain hidden from the readers. In the absence of any real spoken or behavioral proof, the narrative uses the health (or constitution) of the body as a secondary indicator. Indeed, Goethe constructs a grid of analysis in which the body and self are connected such that the strivings of the self are manifested in its own physicality. This means for the beautiful soul that the failings of her self are evidenced in ailments of her body. From the very beginning of the “Bekenntnisse,” the beautiful soul is sick in bed, indicating her destructive attitude toward her own self that sets her

55 For more on communicative practices, see Foucault, Care 51.
negative cycle in motion. Then, throughout her life, she experiences several hemorrhages, each chronicling a moment of self-digression and each one rendering her weaker. Finally, near the end of her life, when her moral self is nothing more than a figment of her imagination, she is too sick to get out of bed again. In one of her final moments, she states, “Ich hielt mich bei meiner schwachen Gesundheit still, und bei einer ruhigen Lebensart ziemlich im Gleichgewicht, ich fürchtete den Tod nicht, ja ich wünschte zu sterben” (FA 9: 787). Her body has deteriorated to such an extent that she is close to death. It is not just that she has remained stagnant, i.e., that her lack of attention to her own self has caused her to become inactive, but rather her passivity has initiated a moral digression inversely manifested in the physical deterioration of her body. Her response is both shocking and depressing, for she looks forward to death. The reasoning is revealed in the following statement: “Es war als wenn meine Seele ohne Gesellschaft des Körpers dachte, sie sah den Körper selbst als ein, ihr fremdes, Wesen an, wie man etwa ein Kleid ansieht . . . Der Körper wird wie ein Kleid zerreißen, aber Ich, das wohlbekannte Ich, Ich bin” (FA 9: 788.). Herein lies the extent to the beautiful soul’s delusion: since she believes she has achieved the fullest extent of moral development on earth, she now wishes to shed her physical existence and to achieve full communion with the divine (this is her ideal reward). But, what she does not realize is that, in her case, death is not a stepping stone to a continued developmental path. Instead, her separation from the body (in death tossing it off her like a garment), her abstract self will simply collapse.

Significantly, the beautiful soul’s pending death is avoidable. The “Bekenntnisse” incorporates numerous prescriptives throughout on how to reverse her negative cycle. Goethe creates within his narrative a common guide for the medicine of the body and the therapeutics of the soul through the practice of self-observation; specifically, self-observation, which leads to
self-understanding (or self-awareness) and then ultimately self-discipline. This prescriptive is introduced through a physician figure who encourages the beautiful soul to cultivate a particular and intense form of attention to her body as the appropriate means to correct her amoral self. He tells her, “Tätig zu sein . . . ist des Menschen erste Bestimmung, und alle Zwischenzeiten, in denen er auszuruhen genötigt ist, sollte er anwenden eine deutliche Erkenntnis der äußerlichen Dinge zu erlangen” (FA 9: 788). The physician summarizes the entirety of the beautiful soul’s developmental failing in a single phrase: her lack of care for her mind has led to a severe disturbance in body. Conversely, if she can gain a “clearer knowledge of external things,” she will in turn revitalize the body and be able to “facilitate activity.” Therefore, the physician suggests, she should use her body as an indicator. The level of its health will reveal the scope of her development in thought. To this the narrative adds: “Er zeigte mir wie sehr diese Empfindungen, wenn wir sie, unabhängig von äußern Gegenständen, in uns nähren, uns gewissermaßen aushöhlen und den Grund unseres Daseins untergraben” (FA 9: 788). That is, not only does the physician prescribe certain applications, but he also demands a particular removal as well. If the beautiful soul is to properly develop in rational thought, she must create better boundaries for her feelings since it is largely her imagination that has continued to “undermine the whole foundation” of her project thus far.56 In essence, as Jean Luscher argues, “the physician has discouraged her from depending too much on this construction of self, as it is in his opinion unhealthy. This observation fully undercuts the serene satisfaction of her ‘wohlbekannte(s) Ich’” (131).

56 Conversely, Jean Luscher locates the beautiful soul’s problem in her confessional writing: “While the ‘schöne Seele’ can use the rhetorical techniques of the confession, she cannot master these techniques and subsequently cannot master her life story” (124).
The beautiful soul, however, fails to heed her physician’s advice. Instead of recognizing the seriousness of her situation, she thinks that her sicknesses are a sign of increased levels of morality (i.e., of an increased level of self-awareness); and her failure to cure her own self ultimately leads to one universal crisis: her utter uselessness within society. For example, she does very little for social welfare. This is largely due to her illness, which forces her to remain in bed. But even in moments when she does give materials (such as clothes) to the poor, she does so out of selfish intentions, not generosity. Surprisingly, the beautiful soul is even conscious of her own purposes, contrasting her social services with those of her niece, Natalie. She states, “Ich gestehe gern, daß ich niemals das Talent hatte, mir aus der Wohltätigkeit ein Geschäft zu machen . . . es mußte mir jemand angeboren sein, wenn er mir meine Sorgfalt abgewinnen wollte. Grade das Gegenteil lobte ich an meiner Nichte . . . Diese alten Sachen zusammensuchen und sie irgend einem zerlumpten Kinde anzupassen, war ihre größte Glückseligkeit” (FA 9: 790–91).

The beautiful soul, by contrast, is content to remain “unbeschäftigt” (FA 9: 790). This is perhaps one of the “Bekenntnisse’s” greatest links to the greater Lehrjahre, for in it, as with the entire narrative as a whole, Goethe envisions self-cultivation for each of his characters as the foundation for model citizenry. Here he implies that the climax to the beautiful soul’s self-cultivation would have been an aesthetic arrangement (i.e., a form of behavior) useful for the betterment of humanity such as beneficence to the poor. Instead, despite the fact that she has both the freedom and time to engage in social services, the beautiful soul remains largely disassociated from society.\(^{57}\) However, the protagonist’s purposes must be questioned. For her

\(^{57}\) This uselessness arguably provides one of the greatest foils to feminist readings of this narrative. Sarah Eldridge and Marianne Hirsch, for example, argue that the “Bekenntnisse’s” crowning achievement is the beautiful soul’s move toward independence. Eldridge, for example argues, “By examining her own spiritual life and adhering to her own brand of religion and way of being, the beautiful soul passes a compelling picture of this particular version of autonomous selfhood – a woman who is content and fulfilled though she lacks husband and child – on to us, as readers” (90); Hirsch celebrates the beautiful soul’s independence in comparison to the other female figures of the
independence amounts to nothing more than a solitary and inactive life. She has neither friends nor family and her lonely death is imminent. It would have been more useful to have truly developed as an independently, moral woman who then engaged with society as both a model and help to others.

It is on account of this uselessness that the beautiful soul’s conversation with her uncle near the end of the “Bekenntnisse” becomes so poignant, for it serves as the last warning in the narrative against the beautiful soul’s chosen, developmental path. Some scholars have argued that, of all the supporting characters in the “Bekenntnisse,” the uncle seems to mirror Goethe’s own voice the closest. His words to the beautiful soul reflect the same advice and warnings of her parents and the physician, while at the same time are more forcefully and threateningly given. Their conversation, which takes place during her sister’s wedding celebrations, is largely spoken in metaphorical language. In addressing the issue of self-cultivation, the uncle engages with the beautiful soul on the subject of identifiable forms and patterns in, first, creation, then, art, and finally human beings. The uncle utilizes these various objects to assert a central thesis. He states, “Sie haben vollkommen Recht, und wir sehen daraus: daß man nicht wohl tut, der sittlichen Bildung, einsam, in sich selbst verschlossen nachzuhängen” (FA 9: 780–81). The uncle first challenges the beautiful soul’s entire way of living: self-cultivation first and foremost cannot

Lehrjahre: “The women in the novel, whether the weak Mignon and Aurelie, or the strong Therese and Nathalie, are either caretakers of men, nurturing mothers, or the victims of male inconstancy. Except for the mysterious free spirit Philine, none but the Beautiful Soul develops a sense of strength and independence. Yet she can do so only by negating the roles reserved for her and by withdrawing from all social intercourse” (28).

58 Susanne Zantop, for example, argues, “Der Oheim ist zweifellos zentraler Gegenspieler der schönen Seele, die einzige Person, die ihren moralischen Ansprüchen gewachsen zu sein scheint und die ihrer introvertierten Religiosität ein rationales Tätigkeitsethos entgegengesetzt, was Kritiker aller Zeiten dazu gebracht hat, ihn mit Goethe zu identifizieren- zu Unrecht, wie ich meine, da auch die schöne Seele ‘goetesche’ Züge aufweist” (Eigene Selbst 77).

59 For further analysis on the objects of nature in the Oheim’s study, see Fleischer, “Figural Representations” 813.
be accomplished in isolation. He then continues: “Vielmehr wird man finden daß derjenige, dessen Geist nach einer moralischen Kultur strebt, alle Ursache hat, seine feinere Sinnlichkeit zugleich mit auszubilden, damit er nicht in Gefahr komme, von seiner moralischen Höhe herab zu gleiten, indem er sich den Lockungen einer regellosen Phantasie übergibt, und sich in Gefahr setzte, seine edlere Natur durch Vergnügen an geschmacklosen Tändeleien, wo nicht an was schlimmerem herab zu würdigen” (FA 9: 408). He tells the beautiful soul that she must return to the spiritual practice of accumulating moral thoughts ("seine feinere Sinnlichkeit zugleich mit auszubilden"). Significantly, it is this crafting of the mind alone that creates the boundaries for the imagination ("Vergnügen an geschmacklosen Tändeleien"). The accumulation, selection and application of such thought is what enables cultivation, whereas solipsism and dilettantism by contrast will only lead to self-degradation. So adamant is the uncle for the beautiful soul to heed his advice that he promises a part of his estate to her if she succeeds in “etwas mustermäßiges aufzustellen” (FA 9: 782). However, even though her uncle later sends her works of art as a reminder of their conversation, the beautiful soul refuses to change; in fact, she continues to have the same solipsistic approach to these paintings as with her earlier readings. The warning, it would seem, has come too late. So withdrawn is the beautiful soul into her own self, “wie eine Schnecke, die sich in ihr Haus zieht” (FA 9: 728) (a phrase she uses to describe herself near the beginnings of her confession), that there is nothing to entice her back out.

The result is that the uncle himself has a hand in the beautiful soul’s removal from society. In particular, he prevents her from seeing her own nieces and nephews. This is not just because her renunciation is both impractical and useless to society, but, even more so, she has also become dangerous to it. Indeed, it is precisely her increasing certainty of the reality of her belief ("die Realität meines Glaubens” [FA 9: 792]), the unyielding forces of solipsism, dilettantism and
narcissism, which renders her dangerous (Fleischer 814). As sole caretaker of these children, the uncle does not want their development to be hindered by such forces. Thus, as he educates them, he also secludes them from whatever might awaken them to an acquaintance with the likes of the beautiful soul’s invisible friend (now recognized as nothing more than the full extent of her imagination and senses). The beautiful soul becomes to her uncle like the characters of Danaides and Sisyphus (FA 9: 779), figures from Greek mythology who represent the futility of a repetitive task that can never be completed. On such characters, the uncle had told the beautiful soul during their conversation, “Gott sei Dank, ich habe mich von ihnen losgemacht, und wenn einer unglücklicher Weise in meinen Kreis kommt, suche ich ihn auf die höflichste Art hinaus zu komplimentieren” (FA 9: 779–80). Now the beautiful soul must also be avoided. There is thus a secondary lesson in the “Bekenntnisse,” certainly unbeknownst to the beautiful soul herself but nevertheless implicit in the actions of the uncle, namely that, while self-cultivation must be done within a social context, there are some relationships, because of their destructive nature, that must be avoided so that one’s self-cultivation (in this case that of the beautiful soul’s nephews and nieces) will not be hindered.

Each of the characters – Aurelie, Wilhelm and Natalie – interprets the “Bekenntnisse” in different lights. Of these three, Natalie (one of the beautiful soul’s nieces and Wilhelm’s future wife) alone appears to fully comprehend the full meaning of the manuscript. Though she describes her aunt as a “treffliche Person” (FA 9: 897), a woman from whom she owes much, she also tempers her appreciation by her comment that her aunt was perhaps too occupied with herself. In response, Natalie chooses to lead a life largely concerned for others. Though the process of her self-cultivation is not outlined, her aesthetic arrangement is: she almost appears as a personification of the welfare state in the novel, caring for poor by giving money or articles of
clothing. Wilhelm’s enthusiastic reception, conversely, reveals his literal and naïve readership. His development in the early books of the Lehrjahre can be characterized as a progression of increasingly more complex and dangerous dilletantism as he retreats further into the realm of his imagination, even to the point of madness, in his belief that he is a greater actor than he actually is. His problem is that in not engaging in appropriate practices for artistic development, he now suffers from the same dilletantism symptomatic of the beautiful soul. It is only after reading her confession that Wilhelm is introduced to a new model of self-cultivation, in which his artistic inclinations can be developed through spiritual practices which can then lead to real aesthetic arrangements such that his delusions, his solipsism and dilletantism can be corrected. But, interestingly, instead of seeking to correct the current form of his self, he chooses to leave the arena of the theater entirely and refashion himself anew within a different context, namely the Tower Society (die Turmgesellschaft). That the Lehrjahre leaves Wilhelm’s new developmental path open-ended prevents the reader from truly quantifying the extent of the beautiful soul’s influence on him. Finally, the actress, Aurelie, to whom the manuscript is originally given, seems to share the greatest affinity to the beautiful soul. She too is sick in both mind and body, and the physician recommends for her to read this confession so as to cherish in her mind “religiöse Gesinnungen” (FA 9: 719). The phrase “true feelings” stands in direct contrast to the “loftier emotions” that the beautiful soul cultivates. However, Aurelie does not perceive this. Instead, she continues to imitate the beautiful soul’s bent toward imagination and the senses and, in the end,

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60 Stefan Fleischer argues that, by Book V, in the events and circumstances surrounding the Hamlet performance, the most telling comment on the destructive potential of imagination is produced: at this point a number of characters, such as Der Harfner, Aurelia and even Wilhelm, who live according to the dictates of imagination are careening into madness (808).

61 In regard to the relationship between the form of the self and social relations, Benjamin Sax also states, “Wilhelm learns that education must not lead to a rejection of the world but to repeated attempts to discover the self within the world; an understanding of his inclinations, of his inner form… is revealed through constant activity” (442).
she experiences a similar end: “Unvermutet fand sie Wilhelm eines Morgens tot, als er sie besuchen wollte” (FA 9: 725).

In conclusion, the beautiful soul is the first character in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* to experiment with this new and hybrid model of self-cultivation and, as such, she becomes an example for the rest of the characters (highlighted in their reading of the “Bekenntnisse” at the end of Book V). Not in the sense that they too should become moral, for that is her unique path, but rather that they should learn from her the proper attitudes and practices available for the modern, yet spiritual individual as they pursue their own development. The “Bekenntnisse” thus establishes the master developmental corrective for the entire narrative. For the characters, having read this manuscript, the information therein is to give rise to, first, a certain mode of knowledge via spiritual practices and, second, to the elaboration of an accompanying aesthetic arrangement that is both visible and useful to the greater society. Herein lies Book VI’s significance within the novel as a whole: it constitutes a social practice, much like traditional pietistic confessions did (consider, for example, Johann Heinrich Reitz’s *Historie der Wiedergebohrnen* [1696]), in that it is to give rise to exchanges and communications between the beautiful soul and the rest of the characters in regard to the topic of *Bildung*.62

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62 For further analysis of the confessant-confessor relationship between the beautiful soul and her readers, see Luscher, *Rhetoric* 113–16.
Friederike Helene Unger’s novel *Bekenntnisse* is arguably crafted as a direct response to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s fictional “Bekenntnisse.” Her purpose is to counter Goethe with a model of self-cultivation from a female perspective. There are several explicit differences between these two beautiful souls, including the attitude that both of them have toward their own development. While Goethe’s beautiful soul assumes a pre-existing level of morality (i.e., a pre-existing level of self-awareness), in Unger’s novel, Mirabella views her self as a *tabula rasa*, seeing her life’s purpose as pursuing a long-term cultivation of both moral thought and behavior.

More importantly, Goethe and Unger provide different methods for how their female protagonists should craft the self. In the “Bekenntnisse,” the beautiful soul’s development fails because she ignores the advice of three men: first, her father, second, her fiancée and, finally, her uncle. Unger, conversely, gradually removes the male voice from her narrative, revealing that Mirabella’s crafting of a specifically female self is founded upon her independence from men.

Finally, the morality of Goethe’s beautiful soul incorporates is strictly religiously-delineated, while Mirabella chooses to craft her morality from secular constructs alone. It is no surprise then

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64 For more on the intertextuality between Unger’s *Confessions* and Goethe’s “Confessions,” see Giesler, *Literatursprünge* 11, 55, 73–74 and Zantop, “The Beautiful Soul” 29–32. For further comparison, see Henn and Hufeisen.
that feminist critics argue that Unger’s novel should be read as a feminist revision of Goethe’s “Bekenntnisse.”

This section will consider how Mirabella in Unger’s Bekenntnisse cultivates a moral self through the spiritual practice of reading. She is still concerned with transformation, but its nexus is no longer her soul, but rather of her thinking; that is, she must cultivate and then act out her own unique form of morality utilizing her individual spheres of knowledge. Thus, instead of gaining an understanding of a doctrinally-based morality, Mirabella intentionally removes herself from any religious authoritative voice so as to create her own subjective moral form. This she accomplishes by first collecting various definitions and depictions of morality from a wide scope of secular literature, then choosing from these which ones she deems as of greatest importance to her, namely virginity and the control of the passions, and then applying these two concepts in great measure to her self. It is this new approach that links Mirabella’s confession with modern self-cultivation, i.e., a set of practices whose goal is the possibility of thinking differently. To this Mirabella then adds an accompanying aesthetic arrangement, which is both tested and refined, so that the cultivation of her moral self can be confirmed.

The Bekenntnisse is written in the form of three letters to Mirabella’s male friend, Cäsar. Her first letter to him begins with a description of her self in its original state as an orphaned child. Her first words are, “Wer meine Eltern gewesen sind, vermag ich nicht zu sagen; denn ich habe sie nie kennen gelernt” (3). In beginning the story of her life as such, Mirabella creates an immediate disconnect from both biological ancestry and religious heritage. In doing so, her

65 See Brewer, Lange, Richards, Schmid and Zantop. These feminist critics, however, widely differ in regard to what exactly Unger revises in her Confessions. For example, Anna Richards considers the emancipatory potential of the heroine’s inner self in order to achieve her own unique individuality (238–39). Cindy Brewer conversely argues that Unger explores the conditions necessary for the successful individuation of the female artist (“The Seduction of the Beautiful Soul” 47); and Sigrid Lange examines the difference in the act of writing between Mirabella and Goethe’s beautiful soul (42–70).
orphaned status metaphorically represents the phenomenon taking place around 1800, in which individuals were beginning to become detached from the socio-familial framework within which their lives used to unfold, including the attitudes, practices and forms of existence that these affiliations affirmed (e.g., traditional gender roles). At the same time, Mirabella the orphan directly challenges the concept of the family – in this first paragraph of her letter, she concludes by stating, “Meine Existenz sey die Wirkung eines Mißbündnisses” (3). She relegates her biological parents to nothing more than a mistake, a “misalliance,” that assumingly she is glad to be rid of. Judith E. Martin argues in this vein that Unger eradicates the stability of the genealogical family tradition in order to emphasize instead Mirabella’s unique and individualistic personality (108). Furthermore, Mirabella’s lack of family correlates to two distinctions of the modern individual. The first of these is an individualistic attitude, defined as the absolute value of the individual in his or her singularity and independence from the group that he or she used to belong to. In this case, Mirabella can focus on her own self since she is detached from her family. The second distinction is in the intensity of the relations to the self. That is, one should see the self as an object that must be acted upon. Here there is a distinction between Mirabella’s self and the pietistic soul, for unlike the Pietist whose original state is already defined (i.e., as sinful), Mirabella sees herself as a blank slate, an object that needs to be crafted and over which she has complete authority.

Having established a certain attitude toward her self, Mirabella begins a program of moral self-cultivation through the spiritual practice of reading that likewise challenges traditional boundaries. This she begins a few days after being adopted when her foster father introduces three French authors to her: Jean de la Fontaine, Peter Corneille and Jean Racine. These works become for her a first education. It is interesting to note that though her adoptive parents are
clerics they do not begin her readings in standard pietistic fashion with passages from the Bible or with common prayers and catechisms; as Mirabella explains, “Wie sehr er auch Geistlicher war, so befaßte er sich doch nicht mit der Unterweisung in der Religion; unstreitig aus keinem anderen Grunde, als weil er noch kein bestimmtes Dogma in mich niederlegen wollte” (5–6). The actions of this foster father immediately deconstruct the traditional authority of the cleric; instead of forcing his daughter to conform, he enables her to become her own individual. Mirabella’s inclusion that “he was spiritual” affirms his continued interest in morals, but not solely those determined by authoritative, religious institutions. For this reason, Mirabella’s adoptive father provides her with a counter-instruction — a set of three French and specifically secular classics, each of which provide their own moral commentaries — and he gives her the freedom to craft from them her own moral code. But not only is this new moral self-cultivation overtly secular, it also strays outside of the confines of what was traditionally considered feminine. Mirabella explains that, “die Lektüre [gehörte] noch nicht zu den Dingen, welche die Elemente einer weiblichen Erziehung ausmachen” (9). She does not label this education as strictly masculine; rather, she speaks of the feminine in a futuristic form. The reading of these specific texts is “not yet” part of a female education, but through such pioneering endeavors as her own, it soon will be.

Mirabella’s treatment of this French literature is focused and intentional. She describes her approach as follows: “So war ich doch durch meinen Pflegevater von meinem funfzehnten Jahre an mit drei französischen Dichtern bekannt geworden, die ich unablängig las und beinahe auswendig lernte” (9). In the first, her moderation contrasts the stereotypical female figure whose
development suffers from reading in excess. More importantly, although these texts are secular, Mirabella reads them through the pietistic lens of introspection. Not only is her reading limited to three authors, but she is close to having their works memorized. Mirabella turns the books she reads into a spiritual practice by reflecting upon the morals presented to her and deciding from them which she would like to apply to herself. Mirabella elucidates her choice with an overview of each author’s texts. She begins with La Fontaine, stating, “Die Fabeln des erstern zogen mich unendlich an, weil in ihnen eine Welt enthalten ist, worin ein jugendlicher Geist sich nur mit Entzücken verlieren kann” (9). She is attracted to the morals of these fables and, in her statement, she even provides a focus to this attraction – it is her “jugendlicher Geist” that delights in La Fontaine’s world. The kind of morality that she desires is intellectual; it is not governed by sentiment, but rather it is something to be learned, and as she further argues, “Ob man gleich glauben sollte, daß ich, als Frauenzimmer, meine Rechnung nur bei dem letzteren gefunden haben könne, so gestehe ich doch ohne Bedenken, daß die Stärke Corneille’s mir wenigstens eben so zusagte, als die Sentimentalität Racine’s” (9). Mirabella provides a new gendered discourse on the type of morality available to her sex, in which her morality will have as much intellect as it does emotion. In doing so, she begins to craft a form of self comparable to, but also distinctly different from her male counterparts. She concludes by stating that “Ich gab dem ersteren um des kräftigen Gemüthes willen . . . im Ganzen Vorzug, wie eifrig auch die Männer” (9). Not only is Mirabella pursuing a form of morality equal to that of any man, but she is also confident that she has just as much of a chance to achieve it.

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66 The figure of the female who reads in excess is explored in several of Unger’s novels. For example, in her first novel Julchen Grünsthal (1784), the moral development of the main protagonist, Julchen, suffers and in fact rapidly digresses when she becomes exposed to a variety of secular texts, which she reads without discernment or reflection.
However, by the second half of the first letter, Mirabella acquires a new reading list on account of her acquaintance with a man named Moritz. Moritz himself has just returned to Germany from a three-year stay in Italy and to some extent he represents a Goethean figure who has embarked on a bourgeois voyage of development. But while Moritz’s budding teacher-student relationship with Mirabella may be a metaphor of Goethe’s own influence on Unger, Mirabella is able to cultivate her self far beyond Moritz, who remains a static figure in the novel. Nevertheless, Mirabella’s discussions with him on the significance of Italian literature are necessary to furthering her moral self-cultivation, even if just temporarily so. In Moritz’s first conversation with Mirabella, he tells her, “Dennoch bin ich sehr geneigt, die wahre Poesie nur bei den Italiänern zu suchen” (18). The primacy of his argument is to provide a specific literary discourse. For eight weeks, he lectures to her on three Italian Renaissance writers: Ludovico Ariosto, Torquato Tasso and Battista Guarini. In one of his lessons, he asks, “Welche Schöpfung ist in dem befreiten Jerusalem enthalten; und wo ist der Franzose, welcher behaupten dürfte, eine ähnliche sey von ihm ausgegangen?” (18). Poesie, that crucial term within Romantic thought, Moritz argues (in very much the same vein as Goethe) is perfectly reflected in the poetry of the Italians alone. His example for this is not arbitrary. In citing “that liberated Jerusalem”, he references Torquato Tasso’s epic poem La Gerusalemme liberata (1575) and in doing so also calls to mind Goethe’s play Torquato Tasso (1790), which he composed immediately after his return to Weimar from his Italian journey. Tasso’s epic poem, historically and fictionally, elevates the language of sentiment to something that is refined, natural and graceful. That is, it is a poem of heightened emotions. Moritz states further, “Nicht Wahrheit will ich, sondern Schönheit, Übereinstimmung mit sich selbst, Harmonie in der höchsten Bedeutung des Worts” (18). The ennobled expression of feeling is one that conforms to a certain classical
model and which also correlates to a control of the passions. It is this latter point that has a profound impact on Mirabella through the course of her studies and which causes her to expand her definition of morality to include this component. This second concept is significant in highlighting Mirabella’s modern pursuit, for its purpose is not, as it is within the Bible, to remove a certain sin, but more so in enlightened terms to eradicate an irrational power within her which refuses to obey reason.

The second letter of the *Bekenntnisse* marks a significant step in Mirabella’s moral self-cultivation. While her readings in the first letter are mediated through others, specifically men – first her adoptive father and then later Moritz – in the second letter she begins to choose her own authors and texts and, as such, she begins to independently exercise her spiritual practice. On her own initiative, Mirabella studies literature and language with a fifteen-year-old princess named Caroline at a summer palace for three months. Though the content of these various texts is a repetition, and an affirmation, of what Mirabella has already been learning both in terms of chastity and controlled passions, it is significant that the books she reads here are of her own choosing – from the idylls of the Swiss poet Salomon Gessner to the Spanish poets Boscan and Garcilaso and the Portugese poet Jorge de Montemayor (51). The text that stands out to Mirabella the most is Montemayor’s *Diana* (1559), a Renaissance novel that celebrates women with the feminine values of purity, chastity, modesty and virginity. It is also through these texts that Mirabella’s self begins to transform. She tells Cäsar: “Wir wurden nicht müde es zu lesen und wieder zu lesen, bis wir ganz Davon durchdrungen waren . . . so kehrten wir in das Lustschloß zurück, wo wir . . . zu Mittag aßen, und uns auf diese Weise selbst das Materielle vergeistigten” (51). The linking of reflection, eating and spiritualizing is not coincidental, for through these actions Mirabella metaphorically digests, in a way quite similar to an anti-
communion, the material she is reading and this digestion symbolizes her successful intake of the moral knowledge that she has hand-picked. Thus, the moment in which Mirabella is able to independently craft her self – both in her choice of reading material and in the application of its literary depictions of morality to her way of thinking – signifies, like the conversion moment in a pietistic confession, the moment of her transformation.

The narrative then takes an interesting turn. Unlike the Bildungsroman, the Bekenntnisse is not structured as an unending journey of education and development. Rather, in terms of structure, it reads more like Francke’s Lebenslauf, in which, after having come to faith, he delineates the ‘fruit’ of his new way of life. Mirabella’s transformation, i.e., the moment in which she claims to have achieved her unique moral form, occurs almost at the exact middle point of her confessions, acting like a climax. The second half of her letters are comprised of observations and commentaries, proofs really, on the aesthetic arrangement of her morality, how the spiritual and the physical are linked in her newly cultivated self. Mirabella’s physicality, however, has been a point of debate within recent scholarship, and there are some who argue that Mirabella is lacking in any kind of physicality. For example, Elisabeth Krimmer states, “The first part of Mirabella’s story focuses all its narrative energy on the dissociation of woman and body. But Unger does not stop at creating a virginal heroine. Rather, all actual and metaphorical ties between the female protagonist and her bodily existence need to be cut” (246). This supposed lack, scholars have argued, reveals how the Bekenntnisse is simply following in the footsteps of Goethe’s “Bekenntnisse;” near the end of the latter, Goethe’s beautiful soul states, “Es war als

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67 I am grateful to those who attended my panel at the 2013 Aphra Behn Society’s biennial conference, “Women, Reputation, and Identity in the Long Eighteenth Century”, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was during the following panel discussion that the issue of anti-communion was brought to my attention.

68 The metaphorical correlation between a Christian’s actions and the fruit that a tree produces is taken from the biblical passage Matt. 7:15-20.
wenn meine Seele ohne Gesellschaft des Körpers dächte, sie sah den Körper selbst als ein, ihr fremdes, Wesen an, wie man ein Kleid aussieht” (FA 9: 788). There are others, such as Cindy Brewer, who have argued instead that Mirabella does in fact possess a certain physical form, but that it can only be understood artificially, namely in her mode of dress. Once again, the comparison is made between Mirabella and Goethe’s beautiful soul, the latter of which cares very little for her clothes, at one time giving her entire wardrobe away (FA 9: 791) and at another time even enjoying how terrible her clothes look on her (FA 9: 771). If this was the case then Mirabella’s claimed morality could easily be relegated to the realm of the superficial and the performative. This chapter disagrees with both arguments: the lack of physicality and the artificial dress. In regard to the latter, Mirabella’s fashion is an odd point of departure considering that the Bekenntnisse makes but a few references to clothing. More significantly, when Mirabella does bring attention to her own dress, it is not to emulate or in any way correspond to the appearance of the Goethe’s beautiful soul but rather to make fun of her poorly constructed artifice; for the little attention given to Mirabella’s clothing in the Bekenntnisse has more to do with the novel’s attempt to challenge the claim that a person’s clothes alone reflect his or her essence.

Mirabella instead institutes a new aesthetic program based on physiognomy. She establishes an entire dissertation on the greater connection between the face and a person’s character, arguing that she can ascertain the moral state of her own self through her physique. For example, she tells Cäsar in her third letter, “Ich [will] nur noch eine artistische Bemerkung machen . . . Die Schönheit als etwas Sichtbares, nur immer das Resultat einer inneren Harmonie ist, die in sich selbst einen Charakter bildet” (81). In this claim, Mirabella sets up a paradigm in which a well-constructed moral self is made evident through physical manifestations of beauty,
whereas its failings conversely result in excesses of the body, such as being made ugly or a
degeneration in health. These physiological conceptions are quite unique for late eighteenth-
century Germany in that they incorporate both biblical principles and modern conceptions of
physiognomy. In the Bible, a person often suffered from bodily ills or diseases if his or her soul
was impure. This is made particularly explicit in the Old Testament, in which various diseases,
such as consumption, fever and inflammation (Deut. 28:22), boils (Exod. 9:8-12) or even death
(Jer. 9:20-22; 14:12) was inflicted upon the Israelites whenever they disobeyed God. Conversely,
obedience was rewarded with longevity of life (Exod. 20:12). It is to these religious notions of
good health that Mirabella incorporates the study of an aesthetically-based physical perfection
from ancient Greece, a study espoused by Johann Kaspar Lavater’s essays on physiognomy
(1775-1778) and Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s “Gedanken über die Nachahmung der
griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst” (1756). Mirabella reveals her knowledge
of these scholars by contending that the physiognomy of the Greeks, more so than either that of
the French or the Italians, as made evident in their statuesque figures, provides the best template
to assess the moral cultivation of the self, for at the heart of Greek art is “eine innere Harmonie
zwischen Gemüth und Geist” (81). This purity of the physical body alone can confirm a moral
integrity of the self.\(^{69}\) By linking an ideal mode of being and physique, Mirabella argues that a
woman should not just exist as a “beautiful soul,” but rather she should also have an
accompanying beautiful body, prompting her to claim near the end of her confessions that, “Eine
schöne Seele könne nur in einem schönen Körper wohnen” (81).\(^{70}\)

\(^{69}\) For a further discussion on the purity of the body and moral integrity, see Schmid, *Unmündigkeit* 98.

\(^{70}\) This is a modification of the famous Latin quotation “mens sana in corpore sano,” meaning “a sound mind in a
healthy body.”
For this reason, in her pursuit of moral self-cultivation, Mirabella does not have to make a choice between the development of her mind or her physical body; rather, she sees the cultivation of her self and the care of her body as interconnected. Mirabella only has to regularly assess her facial features and chestnut brown hair in the mirror every morning. This activity, she argues, is not purposeless. She tells Cäsar: “Mit Wahrheit aber kann ich versichern, daß mich das öftere Hintreten vor dem Spiegel nicht eitel machte; diese Beschauung gewährte mir nur ein Bild von mir selber” (6). Mirabella uses these inspections to assess the entire trajectory of her moral self, not only its current state but also from whence it has come. The inclusion of her hair in this activity is significant, for, as Lavater argues in his *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenenntnis und Menschenliebe*, a person’s hair directly impacts, either positively or negatively, his or her facial features: “Eine kleine Biegung oder Schärfe, eine Verlängerung oder Verkürzung, oft auch nur um die Breite eines Fadens, eines Haares; die mindeste Verrückung oder Schiefheit, wie merklich kann dadurch ein Gesicht, der Ausbruck eines Charakters verändert werden” (143). Thus the “die Üppigkeit meines Haarwuchses” (6) plays a significant role in making her facial features more beautiful. But even where she is not beautiful, Mirabella believes that she is, at the very least, becoming “hübsch” (6). Furthermore, throughout her entire life from childhood onward, Mirabella never gets sick. Here then is one of the greatest distinguishing features between Mirabella and Goethe’s beautiful soul, namely that while the latter slowly digresses physically throughout her confession, thereby revealing the failings of her self as reflected in the degradation of the body, Mirabella, in contrast, continues to remain a picture of good health (95). In this way, Mirabella’s moral self is confirmed.

Finally, having cultivated a specific moral form with an accompanying aesthetic arrangement, Mirabella needs to undergo a testing procedure in order to move forward in the true
acquisition of her cultivated self. In typical eighteenth-century fashion, the court is constructed for Mirabella as the site in which to be tested. It is Mirabella’s task to live amidst its vices, namely amorality and superficiality, to consider if they have a representation within her own moral self and, if so, to remove them. In this way, Mirabella will, as her adoptive father tells her, treat her self “was der Diamant durch die Politur erhält” (34). Interestingly this notion of being tested also finds its origins in the traditional confession, which describes how a believer must undergo various trials in the outside world in order to make his or her faith genuine. It is only after the religious convert has been “refined through fire” that he or she will be able to rid one’s self of sin and thus be made “perfect and complete.”

Likewise, Mirabella must struggle within the court, a place that she recognizes exists wholly in contradiction to her newly cultivated moral self (33), in order that she may strip off anything that hinders her from being both chaste as well as in control of her own passions. However, her intent deviates from the earlier tradition in that she will both assess and remove faults according to her own rules of conduct as opposed to those more institutionally prescribed. According to this modern self-examination, if faults are identified, Mirabella would not charge her self as being guilty per se, but rather her course of action would be to determine the rational equipment needed for future, wiser behavior.

During Mirabella’s time at court, she makes a radical discovery: moral self-cultivation is only possible through a consistent and attentive focus on the self, whereas amorality is the result of a lacking care thereof. She continues to provide an acute diagnosis of the persons of the court, arguing that the root cause of their vices is not a pre-existing sinful state, but rather slothfulness, which leads to boredom, and it is this latter condition that causes various dysfunctions of the self. Mirabella supports this new idea in her analysis of the court’s obsession with card playing, of

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71 These two concepts are taken from the biblical passages Jas. 1:4 and Col. 4:12.
which she states, “Das Spiel, so wie es am Hofe getrieben wird, ist ein *pis aller*; weil es unmöglich ist, eine große Gesellschaft auf eine edle Weise in Thätigkeit zu setzen, so hat man diesen Ausweg erfunden, sie nicht ganz unbeschäftigt zu lassen” (36). From her observation of the court’s vices and its causes, Mirabella begins to fortify herself accordingly by assembling a rigid, daily routine. Like her time at the summer residence, she wakes up early every morning, no matter the season; she then washes, gets dressed and conducts various chores (35); the rest of her day is spent reading.\(^72\) The continuation of her spiritual practice during this time is significant for three reasons. First, it enables her to continue meditating on and applying her chosen truths to herself. Second, her rigid routine, of which her reading is a part, prevents her from becoming bored. Third, the timing of her spiritual practice is crucial in that, since it is conducted in the afternoon or evening, she is able to review the day that had gone by and specifically her progress that day, thereby considering if there had been moments in which she had failed in the care of her self or conversely which vices she had resisted and, in conjunction to this, in what respect she had been made better. It is through this process, through her own efforts, her own constant diligence, that refinement becomes possible.

To this, on account of her time at court, Mirabella comes to represent a champion of middle class morals; for it is in her successful refinement that the moral self she seeks to embody is proven worthy, allowing her to differentiate herself, first, from Goethe’s beautiful soul and, second, from the prototypical courtly woman in the *Bekenntnisse*, who is not given a first name

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\(^72\) During her time at court, Mirabella continues to be strict in choosing her reading material. She only wants to read books that pertains to her moral self-cultivation; any book considered ‘amoral’ is rejected. For this reason, she refuses to read the works of Shakespeare because, she argues, matters of femininity, including chastity, are curiously missing. She argues, “Shakspear hat nur für Männer geschrieben, und Weiber, welche seine Trauerspiele und Lustspiele mit Vergnügen lesen, verderben nichts mehr an sich selbst, wenn sie Pferde reiten” (10). While an argument could be made for the immorality present in Shakespeare’s works, it is most likely that this rejection of Shakespeare has more to do with Unger’s rejection of Goethe, who avidly read and advocated for his works, than an aversion to the works of this English playwright.
either but rather is only referred to as “Madame Etiquette.” The form of Mirabella’s self is genuine, whereas both Goethe’s beautiful soul and “Madame Etiquette” exist superficially. The latter two lack, in Mirabella’s words, an “innerer Gehalt” and an “eigentlicher Kern” (34), the proof of which is found in their inability to create more for their self than just an impression of morality. Mirabella critiques Goethe’s beautiful soul in that, in her retreat from the court, she never allowed her self to be tested and thus, in contrast to Mirabella, she can never fully measure whether her moral self possesses faults or not. “Madame Etiquette,” on the other hand, uses wit and guise, in particular through her recitation of rhymes and verses, in order to elevate her superficial language to an art form. But while she talks in guise, Mirabella conversely speaks only of those truths that comprise her self, thereby reflecting “die höhere Cultur” (45). In other words, while “Madame Etiquette” tries to depict herself as being more virtuous than she actually is, Mirabella’s speech perfectly reflects her own morality. Thus, in having Mirabella analyze her motives, assert her virtues, and reject supposedly female faults such as vanity, she comes to embody the tested, virtuous woman. This achievement allows her to become positioned among other fictional women such as Frau Sternheim in Sophie von La Roche’s Geschichtes des Fräuleins von Sternheim (1771) and the Countess in Christian Furchtiegott Gellert’s Leben der schwedischen Gräfin von G*** (1746). Mirabella’s bourgeois affinities in fact extend across national borders. Many German scholars argue that the feminine virtues upheld in the Bekenntnisse and other German novels around 1800 were taken directly from, or at the very least influenced, by their English and French counterparts. Barbara Becker-Cantarino argues that Sophie von La Roche’s Sternheim is fashioned in the model of Richardson’s Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded (1740) and Clarissa, or The History of a Young Lady (1747–48) as well as Rousseau’s Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse (1761) (12). Judith E. Martin also argues that La Roche integrated
elements from both Richardson’s and Rousseau’s works and, furthermore, that subsequent German women novelists, including Unger, drew not only on *Sternheim* in the German tradition, but also on the earlier international models of Richardson and Rousseau (“Introduction” 8).

Finally, not being a member of the aristocracy, Mirabella is able to illustrate in the same vein as Frau Sternheim and Clarissa that nobility is determined by devotion to morality rather than social standing.

Mirabella’s moral cultivation of both her mind and her body into a true form by the end of the *Bekenntnisse* points to her self-mastery. Through this long letter to Cäsar, Mirabella has shown how she crafted her moral self, separate from pre-existing systems of thought as well as without the help of a metaphysical counterpart, the result of which is that she is able to claim that she is an independent individual, deserving of respect. Indeed, Mirabella makes frequent references and ascribes great importance both to her independent individuality as well as her “Eigenthümlichkeit” (1), recognizing how both were not considered proper for a woman. In this way, Mirabella makes herself a new and even more secular example to not only the ideal representation of the pietistic beautiful soul – typically defined as a passive, virtuous woman, leading an introverted life according to biblical precepts – but also to Goethe’s beautiful soul, who though also largely secular in self nonetheless still develops under the direction of men. Mirabella’s new image of the beautiful soul serves as the foundation for a more modern understanding of a woman who is in control of her own cultivation, including what she reads, how she applies it to her self and how she subsequently thinks and acts.
C. The Authentic Self

The discussion on moral self-cultivation in Goethe’s “Bekenntnisse” and Unger’s *Bekenntnisse* requires a number of caveats. First, these two fictional autobiographies hold an exceptional position within the canon of eighteenth-century German autobiographical writing. There are few novels that incorporate a spiritual approach toward morality. Within these, there do not appear to be any male protagonists, fictional or autobiographical, that undergo a process of moral self-cultivation. This perhaps reflects the affinities that this minor genre shares with the sentimental discourse of the time in which female protagonists where usually the focus. Nevertheless, it brings attention to the gendered nature of this specific model. Furthermore, to my knowledge, there are no Catholic counter examples of moral self-cultivation, thereby confirming the specific Pietist influence of this model.

Nevertheless, the significance of the kind of self-cultivation that these two novels suggest cannot be overlooked; for they allow their protagonists to achieve a level of moral authenticity during a time of growing artifice. They demand that Goethe’s beautiful soul and Mirabella respectively be moral as well as appear moral through some form of aesthetic arrangement. In other words, they provide a prescriptive model of identity for women in which their representations of morality coincide with a real, inner self. In many ways, this is a radical step as it merges two concepts that were becoming increasingly at odds with each other in the eighteenth century. Few other novels, let alone autobiographies, be they German, English or French, attempt such a merge; arguably these include Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1747/48), Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *La Nouvelle Heloïse* (1761) and Choderlos de Laclos’s *Les...
Liaisons dangereuses (1782). But where Goethe and Unger’s fictional autobiographies are unique is in their departure from moral representation in the form of certain attitudes, fashions or performances and how they instead emphasize bodily, specifically physiognomic, manifestations of morality. Not only does this allow for these women’s authenticity to be more concretely quantified, but more significantly it sets up a grid of analysis in which the health and beauty of the body is undeniably connected to the state of their souls.

Furthermore, there are gendered implications for this kind of moral authenticity. First, the level of these women’s agencies in the cultivation of their own self leads to a control, or conversely lack thereof, over their adult lives. It is certainly not amiss that both Goethe’s beautiful soul and Mirabella are given access to their form of development by men— the former through her father and later her uncle, the latter through her adoptive father; significantly, without this male assistance their moral self-cultivation would not have been possible, a situation not uncommon in the eighteenth century. Interestingly, Mirabella’s adoptive father never wields any form of patriarchal control over her. Rather he sets her on the right course, i.e., he provides her with examples from French literature on various depictions of morality, but then allows her to eventually pick and choose her own reading material as well as the freedom to independently create her own thinking in regard to the subject. Male assistance also subsides in the narrative of Goethe’s beautiful soul. However, unlike Mirabella, she is unable to ever replace her uncle’s stance on morality with a collection of her own thoughts. The result is that Goethe’s beautiful soul remains stuck in an in-between position, neither controlled by others or herself. Second, there is a direct correlation between these women’s control over their own self and the outside

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73 See Roulston for a convincing study on how these four canonical works of sentimental fiction unite the concepts of being and virtuous appearance.
gaze. Because of Mirabella’s successful cultivation of an inner moral self, which is reflected in the beauty of her face and hair, she becomes vindicated from a subjective affirmation of her identity by an outsider; for her representation allows for a more objective legitimation of who she is. Goethe’s beautiful soul, conversely, whose body steadily degrades opens herself to judgment and critique by others, in particular men, thereby constantly undermining her claims to being a moral woman. The result is that Mirabella is treated as an equal by both her male acquaintances and friends (e.g., Cäsar), capable of moving in and out of their circles and engaging in discussions with them on a variety of subjects from art to social class, while Goethe’s beautiful soul is seen and treated like a child and remains under constant male supervision.

The model of moral self-cultivation in Goethe’s “Bekenntnisse” and Unger’s *Bekenntnisse* can be characterized as follows: both call for a new form of moral acquisition that is situated between the metaphysical approach in the pietist confession and moral performance in secular accounts of life lived. Nevertheless, this model encompasses conceptual, rhetorical and structural continuities between the religious and secular genres; the former is evident in the inclusion of an inner being, transformation and aesthetic arrangement, the latter is displayed in the mind as nexus (not the soul), secular literature as a catalyst (not the Bible), the rise of individualism and the pleasure of the self (not God). This model, which obviously moves far beyond the pietist program of development, still allows for the modern conversion of the self. This new form of transformation is highly personal as well as subjective, calling for the individual to create his or her own self in a unique way as opposed to following a preexisting model. The morality that both Goethe’s beautiful soul and Mirabella seek to cultivate within their own self in no way parallels the all-encompassing, comprehensive biblical prescriptions, but rather it is supposed to be of
their own creation and, furthermore, its successful cultivation (such as in Mirabella’s case) allows for the rise of the modern, yet spiritually moral individual.
V. CONCLUSION

In my dissertation, I have analyzed the spiritual self in select eighteenth-century autobiographical writing, in particular three male and three female texts: Goethe’s fictional autobiography, “Die Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele,” and Friederike Helene Unger’s fictional autobiography Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele von ihr selbst geschrieben, Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling’s Lebensgeschichte and Anna Louisa Karsch’s Lebensbericht and, finally, Karl Philipp Moritz’ Anton Reiser and Angelika Rosa’s Lebenschicksale. I have argued that each piece of autobiographical writing is unique in its own way and have shown that no spiritual self is identical. Nevertheless, within my study, certain trends are also identifiable. The following highlights these trends on a general scope, provides a gendered comparison of these trends and concludes with an analysis thereof.

I. Trends:

The self in these autobiographical writings continue to give attention to major pietistic concerns: piety (Jung-Stilling and Karsch), a hard work ethic (Reiser and Rosa) and morality (Goethe and Unger). This is a very interesting trend in that it reveals that the first instances of the written self are born out of specifically religious concerns. This reflects Niklas Luhmann’s sociological model of the self. For, as he argues in his chapter on individuality, during the eighteenth century practices formerly limited to religion, such as autobiographical writing, were now for the first time disseminating into other fields. It comes as no surprise then that the first secular accounts of life lived, whose existence was only possible because of this dissemination,
should share similarities with its predecessor. However, at the same time, what distinguishes the self from the soul in these instances is that the former does not want to follow the traditional definitions or guidelines for these concerns, but rather engages with them on its own terms: Jung-Stilling and Karsch understand piety as service to others and not devotion to God; Reiser and Rosa reinvent the purpose of hard work hard from an activity pleasing to God to a form of self-pleasure; Goethe and Unger define morality based on certain intellectual thoughts as opposed to biblical truths. Furthermore, each of these authors uses religious concerns as ploys, or justifications, for their secular pursuits. Karsch and Jung-Stilling use piety as a means to legitimize their professional development; Reiser finds proximity to spiritual concerns throughout the narrative in order to aid his own self in the process of cultivation; Unger’s “beautiful soul,” Mirabella, uses spirituality to give her cultivated self an air of authenticity. The first instances of the written self are thus rooted in pietistic concerns, but at the same time the self intentionally manipulates these concerns to achieve its own personal agenda.

The development of the self is also more organized than generally understood. Traditionally, scholarship has labeled developmental narratives of the self in a more open-ended form, arguing that they are formatted like an unending journey. Thus, the typical narrative of a young man (or woman) who undergoes a journey to discover who he (or she) is and, while the narrative highlights certain moments of self-discovery, it does not conclude with a finalized resolution of who the man (or woman) has become. These secular accounts of life lived are interpreted as narratives in which the self is constantly and continuously forming and shaping itself. However, the autobiographical writings in my study argue against this analysis; the self in these writings follows a developmental scheme that largely mirrors that of the soul. The latter traces its history from pre-conversion, climaxing in the moment of conversion itself, to post-conversion. In similar
fashion, these writings reveal that self is organized in three, similar stages: a pre-developed (or pre-cultivated) state, a moment of transformation, and a post-developed (or post-cultivated) state. For example, Mirabella changes from being a blank slate (*tabula rasa*) to a moral woman; Jung-Stilling and Karsch change professionally from being family-defined (as a tailor and spinner respectively) to individually-defined (a doctor and a poet); Rosa, at the very least, seeks to transform from being a domestic to a public woman. The other protagonists also seek to transform according to a similar developmental scheme, e.g., Goethe’s beautiful soul (like Mirabella) also wants to become a moral woman and Reiser wants to become an accomplished professional. However, these two are unable to complete this process; both, in their own ways, are limited by their own imagination. The significance of the unity in these autobiographical writings’ developmental scheme lies in its intentionality. The self is not just a meandering being, seeking out who it should be and how in listless fashion. Rather, it has concrete goals in terms of how it should be cultivated, it intentionally pursues these goals (which I discuss below) and, finally, these goals are quantifiable.

Furthermore, within this analogous developmental scheme, three specific features become apparent. The first pertains to inner transformation. That is, contrary to traditional scholarship, the first instances of the self are not limited to physical representations. The self is not just the sum of miscellaneous experiences. Furthermore, its development extends beyond an external transformation via participation in and contribution to the culture in which it lives. Indeed, the knowledge of social responsibility alone is not the avenue toward self-development. Instead, the autobiographical writings in my study reveal that self-cultivation first occurs internally. This is one of the most direct links between the self and the soul, for it reveals that, at their core, they share a similar composition. The self and the soul are both born out of the inner man (or woman)
and can thus be categorized metaphysically. Their development, likewise, takes place within this more abstract part of an individual’s being. However, differences between them still remain, in particular the inner transformation of the soul is the heart (i.e., that part of the individual supernaturally linked to the divine), whereas the nexus of change for the self is concretely fixed within the mind. Herein lies the central and major form of inner transformation for the self that Foucault describes: the mind must first be exposed to a variety of forms of thinking and then, from this exposure, craft its own unique mode of thought from the surrounding governing authoritative bodies; its ability to achieve such independent thinking is what Foucault describes as “a conversion to self” (Care 65). The transformations in my study fit these parameters. Jung-Stilling is only able to think separately from his familial trade (tailoring) once he has undergone personal studies in medicine; Karsch also gains independence from her family once she educates herself as a poet. Both the confessions of Goethe’s beautiful soul and Mirabella revolve around their cultivation of moral thought (though Goethe’s beautiful soul never actually achieves her own unique mode of thinking). The fact that the self must undergo an inner transformation at all is intriguing. It reveals that its very being is still bound to a set of conditions of spirituality in which knowledge engenders change. This binding exists only prior to the modern age. The modern age, Foucault states, argues that all that is necessary of an individual is the acquisition of knowledge, without him (or her) having to alter or change in any way his (or her) being (Hermeneutics xxv). That the self in these autobiographical writings requires more than intellectual cognition alone for its development requires a rethinking of how secular and indeed how modern it actually is.

The second feature is spiritual practice. The inner transformation of the self is not just instinctual; rather, it also requires certain spiritual practices. These include exercises and
formulas that enable individuals to properly reflect on, develop and perfect the truths that they read and seek to apply to their own self, including introspection, self-reflection, and memorization. These practices stem directly from the pietistic tradition and, more importantly, are part of the greater biblical model. For example, in the Old Testament, the priests would read the law communally to the people of God. This reading would incite both repentance and renewal (Neh. 8:1-12). At other times, the Israelites were commanded to wear the law on their own bodies as well as place the law strategically throughout their homes in order to read it daily, be reminded of its exhortations and continue to practice them rigorously (Deut. 6:6-7). The New Testament provides similar examples. Romans 12:2 demands that Christians undergo daily transformation through “the renewal of [the] mind.” That is, they must read the word of God daily, study it and memorize it, in order to grow in the faith. The authors in my study engage in similar practices. Jung-Stilling treats his medical manuscripts like the Bible, reading them over and over until he has not only memorized them but can apply them to his daily practice; Karsch too studies and memorizes the poetry that she reads; Rosa memorizes everything she learns and continually reflects on how to apply her knowledge to her own self; Mirabella studies literature until she feels that she has digested them and they have spiritualized within her. Reiser and Goethe’s beautiful soul, in contrast, do not engage in these spiritual practices and this disengagement is largely the cause of their lacking inner transformation. It is interesting that none of these authors attempt to posit new forms of spiritual practices; there is a definite lack of innovation or creativity. Instead, they diligently follow those exercises stipulated by religious parameters alone and their dependence highlights their indebtedness. The cultivation of the self seems largely impossible without an acknowledgement of both its spiritual component and the requirement of spiritual practices.
The third feature revolves around conversion. Each of the autobiographical writings in this study chronicles a conversion experience of the self. This experience can be divided into two parts for analysis. First, there is the actual moment of conversion. Each of the authors can pinpoint the transformative event in their autobiographical writing. It occurs at the beginnings of Jung-Stilling’s wanderings, after Karsch completes her poetry readings, during Rosa’s wedding ceremony, once Goethe’s beautiful soul rejects readings, and after Mirabella has digested her literature. Second, there is the terminology of conversion. Each of the authors utilize various biblical terms to describe their conversion: Jung-Stilling references the New Testament conversion of Saul to Paul, incorporating a great, bright light that penetrates the soul; Karsch talks about a divine spark; Rosa’s conversion by contrast emphasizes the loss of control (similar to the pietistic notion of the loss of will) and the feeling that all is happening like a wild dream; finally, Goethe’s beautiful soul utilizes the pietistic image of a bird to describe her perceived conversion. Reiser is the only protagonist that does not undergo a proper conversion moment. Though he finds himself in situations that are proximally close to such an event, e.g., during his time in the hat maker’s workshop, he never achieves transformation. The result is a sort of anti-conversion moment. Reiser attends church for confirmation and only feels cold shivers running up his spine. Of course, these texts do not mean conversion in the religious sense; this is the self’s moment of individuation, not a coming to faith. Nevertheless, this achievement of individuality can once again be quantified. There is a recognition that true change can be identified in key events within an individual’s life. It is a milestone in the development of the self as opposed to a general commentary on the influence of childhood or one’s school years.

Finally, the last trend evident within this set of autobiographical writing is the divine. In fact, it is present within each narrative except for Mirabella’s confession. This invocation is a paradox
– the original use in a pietistic confession was to highlight all that God as agent had done within the work of a person. He was the one who initiated the inner struggle (the Bußkampf), the conversion and even the life thereafter. However, in the texts of my study, it is the individual not God that initiates these processes. He (or she) feels discontent with his (or her) situation in life as a result of personal interests and not because of recognition of sin. Furthermore, he (or she) undergoes transformation in order to please the self, not to please God. Nevertheless, the divine continues to remain present. For both Jung-Stilling and Karsch, the divine acts as a helper figure. He does not stipulate rules or commands; rather, he simply provides grace and, more often than not, financial aid to these two authors. Goethe’s beautiful soul paints a similar picture of her divine figure. In the autobiographical writings of Reiser and Rosa, in contrast, the divine is present but unknown. It is the mysterious, supernatural power that they both seek to discover, yet continually eludes them. Thus in the first set of examples, the divine is utilized as both support and justification for the self’s pursuits and, in the second, its absence necessitates the greater agency of the self. Mirabella alone does not invoke the divine. Her confession thus represents the greatest attempt at a break from the pietistic model.

II. A Gendered Comparison:

The secondary purpose of this dissertation was to highlight the gendered nature of the spiritual self in these select autobiographical writings. For this reason, three male authors (Jung-Stilling, Moritz and Goethe) and three female authors (Karsch, Rosa and Unger) were chosen. In comparing these different texts, it becomes apparent that the above trends are also gendered in nature and that key differences can be identified between the men and women as it pertains to
agency, transformation and spiritual practices. As such, specific attention must be given to how the female authors treat these various aspects of the self in different but equally complex ways to their male counterparts.

These women all actively assert agency in their pursuits. They do not want to just create distance from God, but also from other men. In particular, they make explicit that they need not be reliant on men, or masculine models, to help craft their self. This is most explicitly depicted in Unger’s *Bekenntnisse*, in which Mirabella crafts a moral self without help from a single male figure. The books that she reads and the truths that she memorizes are both of her own choosing. Furthermore, her ensuing aesthetic arrangement does not follow traditional religious or societal expectations of morality; rather, she creates her own moral, behavioral program. This is also largely what Unger means in her title “von ihr selbst geschreiben.” Mirabella’s confessions is an entirely female endeavor. Furthermore, her critique of Goethe’s beautiful soul focuses primarily on how she is continually influenced by various male figures, beginning with her father, then her fiancé and later her uncle. The other female authors also exert agency in their own way. For example, Rosa’s two *Vorbilder* are both female. Thus, whether she developed within the public or private sphere, either choice would be influenced by a female authoritative figure. It is a foreign Turkish woman who encourages her to develop in ways traditionally limited to men, but it is also women from her hometown who force her to stay within the confines of the home. Rosa challenges the gender divide by showing women divided in opinion, some endorsing independence while others subservience. Karsch, in contrast, successfully cultivates her self without male assistance, but then she submits herself to male authoritative bodies in order to achieve social acceptance. Through these different approaches in agency, these women prove
that they are capable of cultivating the self wholly independent and in innovative ways different from men (even though this capacity is not always recognized or permissible).

Though both the male and female authors describe their self-transformations in terms of changes in thought, they still differ in terms of mode, quantity and use. This study reveals that the female authors depict their transformed selves as the sum of a cumulative number of changes in thought, whereas men’s transformations are more singular in nature. Consider, for example, Jung-Stilling and Karsch. Karsch is exposed to a variety of poetic texts throughout the course of her adult life; she studies different forms of spiritual songs, including hymns and lyric poetry, as well as the works of Klopstock and Gellert. Karsch does not limit her knowledge to a singular poem; rather, she selects ideas from each poem she reads and her unique mode of thought is the product, or collection, of them. In contrast, Jung-Stilling, even though he though learns different forms of science, from natural studies to folk manuscripts and later university training, does not accumulate these thoughts, but rather replaces one for the next. By the time he graduates from the University of Straßbourg, he has thoroughly rejected everything he had previously learned from his experiences in the fields and with Molitor. Reiser and Rosa are quite similar – while Rosa also accumulates every piece of knowledge she is given (from medical advice to studies in foreign languages), Reiser only engages in one field of knowledge at a time (first hat making, then preaching and finally acting). Undoubtedly, both the male and female self are still unique in their own way. However, it also shows that the female self has a more expansive mode of thought, while the male self is more focused. This is a specifically gendered divide. In terms of historical context, this difference in approach highlights the different accesses to higher education; men were able to attend universities at this time, while women were rarely admitted. It also shows women’s response to this context. Though they were not able receive the same
concentrated type of education as men (for example, Jung-Stilling was able to specialize in medicine), they prove that they should belong to the same intellectual sphere. These female authors prove that they have the same capacity of learning as men in their active practice of consulting and applying various sources of knowledge to their self.

Finally, the male and female authors engage in different approaches to spiritual practices, in particular as it relates to both memorization and application. The male protagonists (Jung-Stilling and Reiser) study by reading and then re-writing, while the female protagonists (Karsch, Rosa, Goethe’s beautiful soul and Mirabella) read and then verbally rehearse what they have read. Jung-Stilling copies Molitor’s manuscript continuously until he has memorized every word. Karsch, on the other hand, reads her books aloud until she knows each poem by heart (though even she then forgets some of the words). Reiser, while learning to become a preacher, first reads an extensive number of sermons and copies them by hand on his chalkboard; it is only after this initial practice that he begins to formulate and recite his own sermons. Rosa, by contrast, verbally learns her skills from her teacher, Madame Groot, and memorizes them by teaching the same lessons to her fellow students. In similar fashion, both of the beautiful souls memorize moral truths by, first, reading them and then speaking them aloud (even if only to themselves). The verbalization of their knowledge, in tandem with their memorization, points to the uniqueness of the female approach. For the men, in contrast, knowledge is only utilized for their personal needs. The women approach knowledge in a more communal fashion. Not only is knowledge often transmitted to them verbally, but they in turn verbally share what they have learned with others. Thus, for example, Karsch immediately begins singing for her neighbors and friends, Rosa becomes a governess in order to share her knowledge with children, and Mirabella takes it upon herself to educate other women, including a young princess. These women practice
verbal memorization, not just for their own transformation, but also for the transformation of others.

This gendered comparison of the spiritual self reveals that the chosen female authors present a variety of new and strictly female models of self-cultivation that are different as well as independent from men. The following features (among others) characterize the female approach: creativity, accumulation, and verbalization; and, within this approach, women also exert agency, capability and communal engagement. These women (Karsch, Rosa, Mirabella) are capable of crafting their own self according to their own personal interests and based on their own methods. They do not need masculine models to achieve individuality and, as such, they are able to achieve modes of thought that are both different and independent from men. Furthermore, and more significantly, they do not keep their success to themselves. Rather, they seek to share through their autobiographical writing the models that they have discovered with others, in particular other women.

III. Conclusion:

In conclusion, the above trends reveal that the beginnings of the self were not wholly separate and original from its predecessor (the soul). It still required a model to base both its conception and development from (as well as against), and the pietistic model became that structure. Not only does the self share an innate inner form of being with the soul, but it also realizes that an inner transformation must take place for real development. Furthermore, these first instances of the self reveal that the self did not yet have its own interests, but rather was forced to utilize the interests of the soul. It was not until after 1800, when pietism had declined
and with it the belief in morality, piety, hard work etc. that the self was able to move past these structures. The question, however, remains whether the self then gained its own independent interests or if it simply subsumed itself into another model.
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