

alternieren mit 14 buntköpfigen Streichhölzern, die durch ihre Farben die Form eines (Shakespearischen) Sonnets repräsentieren. Ein solches 'shakespyromanisches' Sonnett hatte Erika Greber selbst schon 2001 geschaffen (vgl. Abb. 2, 538)—und auch andere Formen des 'konkret'-gegenständlichen Sonetts, wie etwa das zusammen mit Stefan Schukowski kreierte "Schüttelspeer-Sonett," dessen 14 Zeilen aus den Abbildungen horizontal untereinander platzierter Speere gebildet sind (vgl. Abb. 4, 538). Wie mit Grebers erwähnter Monographie über "Textile Texte" ist es auch mit diesem Band gelungen, die historisch und ästhetisch kundige Erschließung, die philologisch gründliche und aspektreiche Beschreibung eines breiten Spektrums ästhetisch bedeutsamer und faszinierender Phänomene mit deren sinnlich ansprechender Präsentation zu verbinden. Der von Evi Zemanek und ihren Helfern publizierte Tagungsband ist als gestaltetes Buch eine so ansprechende wie sachlich bereichernde Hommage nicht nur an das Sonett, sondern auch an Erika Greber.

Ruhr-Universität Bochum

—Monika Schmitz-Emans

Marriage, Gender, and Desire in Early Enlightenment German Comedy.

By Edward T. Potter. Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2012. ix + 198 pages. \$75.00.

Considering the three principal terms in Potter's title—gender, German, and comedy—one observes that recent studies tend to treat only one or two of these. Potter, by contrast, links all three entities, focusing on one genre and one decade—German comic drama in the 1740s—in a literary-historical examination of one broad theme, the sentimental marriage. Defined as marriage for love rather than for financial, political, or otherwise utilitarian reasons, the sentimental marriage is in essence still the dominant form of marriage in the West today, although it has of course experienced multiple modifications. Potter's central aim is to elucidate the ramifications of this concept as portrayed in several comedies of the time: J.C. Gottsched's *Atalanta* (1741), C.F. Gellert's *Die zärtlichen Schwestern* (1747), J.E. Schlegel's *Der Triumph der guten Frauen* (1748), G.E. Lessing's *Der Misogyne* (1748), and Th.J. Quistorp's *Der Hypochondrist* (1745).

Most of the subjects Potter treats in his investigation of these early Enlightenment comedies take the form of dichotomies, above all, the relationship between the sentimental marriage and sexual desire, the tension between the sentimental marriage and financial considerations, and the conflict between the sentimental marriage and female autonomy. All of these have implications for the preservation of the social order. The role of money in marriage is illuminated, for example, in Gellert's *Die zärtlichen Schwestern*, in which the marital unions of two daughters succeed because of their own personal attributes despite the fact that their father lacks a dowry for them. Similarly, Lessing's *Der Misogyne* satirizes the economically driven marriage as well as marriages based solely on sexual desire. This last topic evokes a crucial function attributed to the sentimental marriage in this period: for Gottsched and Gellert, the sentimental marriage is the most effective means of maintaining morality and keeping order in the face of potential sexual chaos.

But among the forces opposing the sentimental marriage, Potter devotes the most attention to female autonomy. The title heroine of Gottsched's pastoral play

Atalanta, resolutely averse to marriage, is repeatedly thwarted by the other characters in her attempt to retain her independence as a virgin huntress. As the didactic nature of these plays would have it, she is in the end “tamed” through the revelation of her true identity and moves into her proper position on the threshold of the altar. In a similar manner, the sister called Julchen in Gellert’s *Die zärtlichen Schwestern* insists on her autonomy as an unmarried woman, preferring friendship to marriage. Because the mores of the time regard such views as subversive to the social order, however, she is ultimately manipulated into accepting marriage. Potter does not merely present the victory of this institution over the forces opposing it but acknowledges the ways in which the advocacy of the sentimental marriage reveals its repressive nature.

The sentimental marriage is perhaps most strikingly called into question in Quistorp’s *Der Hypochondrist*, written in the context of eighteenth-century medical, literary, and popular discourse on the topic of hypochondria. The play posits that hypochondria is caused by homosexuality, both of which oppose marriage. In using hypochondria as a means of avoiding marriage and heterosexual relations, Quistorp’s protagonist is able to strengthen his bond with his male servant, the object of his desire. Potter demonstrates the ways in which satirical comedy in this play is intended to effect moral reform in the audience by functioning as a corrective for nonnormative behavior, specifically homosexuality.

Potter’s book makes use of various insights contributed by gender studies in recent decades. His chapter on cross-dressing in Lessing’s *Der Misogyne*, for instance, examines the dichotomy between the constructed, performative nature of gender roles and the extent to which gender is grounded in the body. Yet this and other analyses might have profited from consideration of theorists on gender and performance, such as Judith Butler, to mention perhaps the best known of these thinkers.

The plays Potter treats were to varying degrees popular in their day, but they are obviously not part of today’s dramatic canon. This fact perhaps explains why Potter discusses the works in great detail, providing extensive plot summaries. At times this practice is excessive, and it occasionally leads to repetition. However, the study is extremely well researched, and Potter clearly knows the literature on the plays he examines. Although the subject matter is strictly German, his translation of all quotations into English widens his audience considerably. The book should be of interest to specialists in eighteenth-century studies, comic drama, gender studies, and the history of marriage and the family, among other fields. *Marriage, Gender, and Desire* does much to illuminate social issues and institutions which, while finding their cultural articulation in the eighteenth century, are still of central importance in our own times.

University of California, Davis

—Gail Finney

Uncivil Unions: The Metaphysics of Marriage in German Idealism and Romanticism.

By Adrian Daub. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012. viii + 366 pages. \$35.00.

Uncivil Unions is a rich exploration of concepts of marriage in philosophical and literary texts of the 1790s and beyond. As Daub argues at the outset, this book explores