ELIZABETH ANNE FURTAH KOVACICH
The Father-Daughter Relationships in G.E. Lessing's Domestic Tragedies
(Under the Direction of MAX REINHART)

Patriarchs in three of G.E. Lessing's domestic tragedies abide by the unspoken rules set forth during the eighteenth century as they try to control their daughters' lives and relationships. Within all three domestic tragedies, Lessing conveys the roles the patriarch and the daughter play, as well as how these roles were effectively compromised by outsiders. Lessing also portrays the price the daughters must pay as a result of their fathers following a system dictated by society.

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THE FATHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS IN G.E. LESSING'S DOMESTIC TRAGEDIES

by

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DEDICATION

To my grandmother, Marion Elizabeth Kelley Trumble (1912-1999), whose support allowed me to pursue my interest in language.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, expectations between a father and daughter have included elements of understanding by both parties and obedience exhibited by the daughter. In the patriarchal society of the eighteenth century, a father was expected to protect his daughter under any circumstance, especially one he deemed harmful; in return, the daughter needed to willingly obey her father's expectations. According to Gail K. Hart, the phenomenon presented in eighteenth-century German drama is one in which the father and daughter strike a balance of complementarity; the father represents maturity, whereas the daughter represents youth. Furthermore, he exhibits strength, while she demonstrates weakness; the father is rigid, and the daughter is flexible. Hart also comments that all this is ". . .underscored by the symbiosis between his authority and her submissiveness" (120).

However, the balance of the father-daughter relationships in G.E. Lessing's domestic tragedies *Miß Sara Sampson, Emilia Galotti*, and *Nathan der Weise* is affected by other influential figures outside the relationships. Suitors come to rob the father of his most prized possession, and the mother's or mother figures' actions unintentionally undermine the authority laid down by the father. According to Susan E. Gustafson, as the fathers of Lessing's dramas begin to realize the balance of their relationships is less than

secure, for them the "greatest fear is to become a father without, without a daughter to mirror and adore him" (123).

In each of Lessing's dramas, Lessing portrays the strong-willed character traits that lead daughters to rebel against their fathers in a society that demands obedience from women, even in their thoughts. "Da sie selbst keine Rechtpersonen sind, sind sie im juristischen Sinne von Vätern, Ehemännern, Brüdern oder anderen männlichen Vormundgestalten abhängig und besitzen an sich kein Recht auf Eigentum" (Wurst, *Frauen* 26). Furthermore, Lessing demonstrates the devastating outcome of such a patriarchal society on its women as the daughters and mother figures become victims of the rules imposed upon them. Through each of his domestic tragedies, Lessing gives evidence of the downfalls of society's impact on the family, using the extreme situation of the deaths of the daughters and their relationships, as well as depicting the mother and mother figures as only being able to provide negative resolutions.

These dramas also describe the unconditional love fathers and daughters share, the protection a father wishes to bestow upon his daughter, and how these elements of love and protection can lead to a position less than desirable. The "father-daughter-seducer triangle" (Jonnes 164) that exists in all three tragedies is indicative of such love and protection. Yet in Lessing's dramas, the suitors are not the only obstacles in the father-daughter relationships. Female antagonists and mother figures whose roles eventually have a detrimental impact on the outcome of the daughters' lives play a significant part as well.

The type of father-daughter paradigm Lessing portrays reflects the eighteenth-century family and societal hierarchy. Lisa C. Roetzel discusses this in terms of aesthetic discourse: it is almost exclusively concerned with men and must "protect and uphold the identities of men" (86). Hart also observes that "the elimination of the mother/wife figure, especially her elimination from plays featuring a father-daughter conflict, has been accounted for in terms of the diminished social status assigned to housewives and mothers in the eighteenth century" (114). This family structure allows for the fathers to be associated with supreme authority, giving him ultimate influence over his daughter.

The father-daughter relationships in Lessing's tragedies place the father in a hierarchical position, enabling him to control his daughter's life, even in the most subtle ways. This includes how the daughter reacts when the father disapproves of her lover, for the fathers are unwilling to accept another man in their daughters' lives. Therefore, death, in the father-daughter as well as the daughter-lover relationships, is the only solution, whether physical or symbolic. Hart attests that all women under eighteenth-century societal regulations must be eliminated, and that "with the removal of mothers and those who may soon develop into mothers, the father plays all roles, from the strong and wise authority figure to the tender and nurturing parent" (117-18).

However, if a father possesses ultimate control over his daughter's life and is both the "authority figure" and the "nurturing parent," where in the familial dynamic does the mother belong? In each of Lessing's domestic tragedies the mother or mother figure is placed in a position of harming the daughter by either physically killing her or simply by creating a situation where the daughter will effectively lose her relationship with her

father. In *Miß Sara Sampson,* Betty gives Sara emotional support, but she is also the one to administer the deadly poison Marwood leaves behind. In *Emilia Galotti*, Claudia moves with her daughter to the city, away from Odoardo, under the guise of having a better life, yet it is precisely this situation that allows the Prince to see Emilia and that ultimately is the cause of her death. Daja is Recha's caretaker and mother figure in *Nathan der Weise*, a role she jeopardizes when she feels she must tell Recha the truth about Recha's life. This ends Recha's hope of ever being with the Templar, at the same time ending her biological relationship with Nathan. Although each of these women has a significantly positive role initially in the daughters' lives, eventually it is "the negative or negligible role of wife/mother" (Jonnes 157) that stands out. Gustafson asserts that the "daughters, caught between the admired paternal [*Bewunderung*] and the abject maternal [*das Schreckliche*], must somehow escape the influence of their mothers and reaffirm the cohesiveness of the father-daughter dyad" (187).

It is not only the mothers and mother figures who have a negative impact on the daughters' lives. If it weren't for Marwood and Orsina providing the means to kill Sara and Emilia, they might not have died, though they are able to achieve the girls' deaths without using their own hands. As Alexander Mathäs argues, "if women are portrayed in a positive light they are generally passive, innocent victims of a corrupt courtly society which in some instances itself became associated with effeminate qualities. Their morally flawed antagonists are usually independent, shrewd and intellectually superior. . ." (41). These "morally flawed antagonists" are able to undermine the other characters with their conniving intellect.

It is an understatement to say that even the best-behaved daughters will rebel against their fathers, particularly when a man is involved. How the father judges and reacts to the situation is what Lessing portrays in his domestic tragedies. Because of the fathers' actions, or his adherence to a patriarchal society's rules, the relationships between the father and daughter ultimately end in with the extreme conclusion of death. In *Nathan der Weise*, Recha's relationship with Nathan as a father figure is not extinguished; however, her biological family ties become the focus in the last scene, a scene in which Nathan is absent. Since Recha's "death" is not physical, Gustafson argues that "*Nathan der Weise* (1779) is not technically a domestic tragedy, but like Lessing's domestic tragedies, it is the story of a familial crisis" (217). The familial crises presented by Lessing in his tragedies demonstrate to the audience what a patriarchal society's views do to the family: a father in charge who, until it is too late, believes wholly that his way is the best way; a daughter who, if not obedient, must find a way to compromise her disobedience according to society; mother figures who try to help but only damage the situation at hand; and a mother who is considered "a simpleminded busybody or overambitious panderer (pursuing social advancement at the risk of her daughter's virtue) and banished from the scene of family struggle" (Hart 113). Lessing shows that the tragic death of the father-daughter relationship is the final outcome of that society's harsh rules.

CHAPTER 2

THE FATHER-DAUGHTER RELATIONSHIPS IN THE PATRIARCHAL ORDER OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The bourgeois family paradigm is reflected in Lessing's fathers, who are powerful and controlling entities in *Miß Sara Sampson, Emilia Galotti,* and *Nathan der Weise.* Karin Wurst reminds us that the eighteenth century was "eine stark patriarchalisch ausgerichtete Zeit, in der der Vater die 'Ordnung' verkörpert und die Muttergestalt unwichtig bleibt" (115). The fathers play an important role as the head of the family, overseeing their daughters' lives with care and wisdom. However, the love the fathers have for their daughters sometimes overrides rational sentiment, and they feel they must do whatever necessary in order to keep their daughters obedient, loving, and faithful. The daughters' roles as obedient children are compromised when other men enter their lives, and it is through daughter-seducer relationships that the conflicted father-daughter relationships of Lessing's domestic tragedies take shape. F.J. Lamport observes that "often the paradoxes of tragedy seem to be reduced to simple moral equations: if the world is ruled by a benevolent Providence, then virtue must always be rewarded, and suffering can only be the punishment of wickedness" (54). The daughters' worlds are ruled by their fathers, who either reward or punish them for their actions, and in the case of Lessing's tragedies, reward and punishment become life and death.

In *Miß Sara Sampson*, Sir William is Sara's father and she therefore should obey him according to eighteenth-century society's demands, yet when she is dissatisfied with the strict rules concerning her future with Mellefont, she flees Sir William's house. After fearing her father may have died from heartache during the nine weeks she has been gone, Sara learns that her father is still alive and has come for her. Instead of fearing punishment in the traditional sense, Sara now fears what her father will allow her to do, indicated by her conversation with Sir William's servant, Waitwell as she decides whether or not to read her father's letter. If Sara is no longer being punished for her disobedience, Sir William has thus acted out of character for the eighteenth-century dominant male figure, and the rigid structure has therefore vanished. Hart notes that "Sara is sharply critical of her father's methods (though this is an exercise in self-effacement) and her objections are based on an inner commitment to old-style patriarchy. A father should not 'ask' his daughter for something: he should merely issue orders" (120). Sir William is now allowing Sara to make her own decisions, which frightens her:

> SARA. So behalte nur deinen grausamen Brief!
>
> WAITWELL. Grausamen? fürchten Sie nichts; Sie erhalten völlige Freiheit über Ihr Herz und Ihre Hand.
>
> SARA. Und das ist es eben, was ich fürchte. Einen Vater, wie ihn, zu betrüben: dazu habe ich noch den Mut gehabt. . . . Wenn sein Brief alles enthielte, was ein aufgebrachter Vater in solchem Falle Heftiges und Hartes vorbringen kann, so würde ich ihn zwar mit Schaudern lesen, aber ich würde ihn doch lesen können. Ich würde gegen seinen Zorn noch einen Schatten von Verteidigung aufzubringen wissen, um ihn durch diese Verteidigung, wo möglich, noch zorniger zu machen. (3.3; 43)

Shortly after this exchange, Sara explains that she would sacrifice everything for her father. Her gesture of falling to her knees at his feet describes more than a relationship between a father and a daughter; it is one of utter obedience:

> . . . wenn in dem Augenblicke, da er mir alles erlauben wollte, ich ihm alles aufopfern könnte: so wäre es ganz etwas anders. Ich wollte den Brief mit Vergnügen von deinen Händen nehmen, die Stärke der väterlichen Liebe darin bewundern und, ohne sie zu mißbrauchen, mich als eine reuende und gehorsame Tochter zu seinen Füßen werfen. (3.3; 44)

When speaking of Sir William, both Mellefont and Sara describe him as possessing qualities of a righteous man. Mellefont therefore chastises himself and Sara for disobeying Sir William: "Ach Miß, warum haben wir so einen göttlichen Mann betrüben müssen? Jawohl, so einen göttlichen Mann: denn was ist göttlicher als Vergeben?" (3.5; 52). Sir William will do anything for Sara's love, but Sara assures Marwood it is not simply an act in order to entice Sara to return to him, for her father would never speak falsely: "Ich stehe Ihnen dafür, daß mein Vater sich zu keiner List herablassen kann. Er sagt nichts, was er nicht denkt, und Falschheit ist ihm ein unbekanntes Laster" (3.5; 52). Gustafson comments, "Sir William is concerned solely with Sara's capacity to love him. He can forgive her all crimes or transgressions as long as she remains the 'Stütze (s)eines Alters' [staff of (his) old age]" (126). This clearly exhibits the unconditional love between these characters and the patriarch of the play.

Throughout Act 5, Sir William is asked to "forgive and forget." As Sara lies on her deathbed, she hopes that Sir William has forgiven her: "Wiederhole mir, daß mein Vater versöhnt ist und mir vergeben hat. Wiederhole es mir, und füge hinzu, daß der ewige himmlische Vater nicht grausamer sein könne" (5.8; 87). Sara reiterates her need

to obey Sir William, referring to him as "Bester Vater," and wishes once again "daß ich mich zu seinen Füßen werfen kann" (5.9; 88). Sir William's role as patriarch is taken to a higher level when Sara calls out to him, "Segne mich, wer du auch seist, ein Bote des Höchsten, in der Gestalt meines Vaters oder selbst mein Vater!" (5.9; 88). Sara accepts her sins as the dutiful daughter should have already done, and admits her mistakes that have been forgiven by Sir William: "Doch nicht Augenblicke, lange Tage, ein nochmaliges Leben würde erfo[r]dert, alles zu sagen, was eine schuldige, eine reuende, eine gestrafte Tochter einem beleidigten, einem großmütigen, einem zärtlichen Vater sagen kann. Mein Fehler, Ihre Vergebung . . . " (5.9; 89).

In Act 3, Scene 3, Waitwell already has attempted to persuade Sara "to accept her father's forgiveness and, together with this, to forgive herself," notes Ann Schmiesing (25). However, Sir William wonders why he did not forgive his daughter immediately: "Soll ein Vater so eigennützig handeln? Sollen wir nur die lieben, die uns lieben?" (5.9; 89). Sir William follows the traditional role of the father as the "dictator" and stands by his word, punishing Sara by abandoning her until it is too late to save her. Mellefont asks Sir William, "Warum kamen Sie nicht eher? Sie kommen zu spät, Ihre Tochter zu retten!" (5.10; 90).

As Sara dies she says, "Ich sterbe und vergeb es der Hand, durch die mich Gott heimsucht" (5.10; 91). Just as Sir William forgives Sara, she forgives Marwood for her crimes against the family. Upon Sara's death Mellefont wishes to know that Sir William will now be his father as well, searching for that patriarchal role to be filled in his life. Sir William agrees, albeit at the same time admitting that he has fulfilled the role of patriarch

all too well, which in the end is insufficient for the love between a father and daughter: "Ich bin Vater, Mellefont, und bin es zu sehr, als daß ich den letzten Willen meiner Tochter nicht verehren sollte" (5.10; 93). Shortly thereafter, Mellefont commits suicide with the same dagger with which Marwood would have killed him had he not stopped her, leaving a daughter of his own. Sir William was Sara's father, and now will be Arabella's. His role as patriarch becomes solidified because of his acceptance to control another's life as expressed in the last lines of the tragedy: "Komm, schleunige Anstalt zu machen, und dann laß uns auf Arabellen denken. Sie sei, wer sie sei: sie ist ein Vermächtnis meiner Tochter" (5.10; 94).

Mellefont's and Arabella's father-daughter relationship also portrays the father of the eighteenth century in a powerful role, though the paradigm is slightly changed: he is not in control of his daughter's life. Marwood comments that, "Arabellen sieht er als einen kostbaren Teil seiner selbst an . . . " (2.1; 21). As Arabella enters the room, Marwood refers to Mellefont as her "Beschützer" and "Freund," and she encourages Arabella to speak with her heart. When Arabella discovers that her father does not plan to stay with her and her mother, she innocently asks, "Verläßt man denn die, die man liebt?" (2.4; 28). She challenges his patriarchal role in which he should be taking control of the family, not leaving it behind. Arabella tells her mother that Mellefont is good and must be forgiven (2.5; 31), and upon Mellefont's return, he assures Arabella that he would not leave her. Telling her to take hold of his hand, he beckons Arabella to follow him, as one trustingly follows one's leader: "Geben Sie mir die Hand, und folgen Sie mir nur getrost" (2.6; 32). It is, however, Sir William whom Arabella will eventually follow, as he

becomes the epitome of the eighteenth-century patriarch in the role of Arabella's father. "The patterns of returns to the father will continue indefinitely as long as one daughter can simply be replaced by another" (Gustafson 167).

In *Emilia Galotti*, Claudia makes a comment after Appiani's murder, in which Odoardo is portrayed as the protector and savior: "Ah, unser Beschützer, unser Retter!" She tries, in an effort to appease the patriarch of the family, to convince Odoardo that neither she nor Emilia is guilty (4.8; 453). Emilia later turns her father's patriarchal role against him, attempting to convince Odoardo that as her protector he must save her from shame: "Ehedem wohl gab es einen Vater, der seine Tochter von der Schande zu retten, ihr den ersten den besten Stahl in das Herz senkte - ihr zum zweiten Male das Leben gab" (5.7; 465).

Odoardo's strong patriarchal role is further exhibited by the desire others have for him to be their father. From the onset of the drama, Emilia's fiancé, Appiani, is almost desperate to have Odoardo become his father and for himself to be worthy of such a commitment. Appiani establishes the role of Odoardo as the ideal father:

> - Welch ein Mann, meine Emilia, Ihr Vater! Das Muster aller männlichen Tugend! Zu was für Gesinnungen erhebt sich meine Seele in seiner Gegenwart! Nie ist mein Entschluß, immer gut, immer edel zu sein, lebendiger, als wenn ich ihn sehe - wenn ich ihn mir denke. Und womit sonst, als mit der Erfüllung dieses Entschlusses kann ich mich der Ehre würdig machen, sein Sohn zu heißen, - der Ihrige zu sein, meine Emilia? (2.7; 422)

"Appiani's priorities in marrying Emilia are clear. First and foremost, he desires to be Odoardo's son, and secondarily, to be Emilia's husband" (Gustafson 175). Appiani is not the only character of Lessing's to covet Odoardo as a surrogate father. Orsina calls him "Guter, lieber Vater!" and says, "Was gäbe ich darum, wenn Sie auch mein Vater

wären!" (4.7; 451). The Prince confesses he would like for Odoardo to be his father also: "O Galotti, wenn Sie mein Freund, mein Führer, mein Vater sein wollten!" (5.6; 462). Gustafson points out that Appiani's view of Odoardo as the "paragon of paternal values" is underscored by the fact that characters such as Orsina and the Prince, who have less than perfect ideals, also wish Odoardo to be their fatherly figure. "What is at stake in *Emilia Galotti* is paternal, patriarchally sanctioned virtue" (175).

Odoardo's patriarchal role is solidified before Emilia's abduction when he reprimands Claudia for her role in Emilia's circumstances (2.4; 416). Denis Jonnes concludes that "Odoardo is an authoritative, resolute figure, certain– perhaps too certain– of his moral principles" (165). Although Odoardo is perturbed that his wife and daughter dwell in the city, he "seems to have few qualms about abandoning wife and daughter . . . to what he himself has recognized as a corrupting moral environment" (166). Jonnes also contends that Odoardo has lost his previous decisiveness upon arriving at the Prince's *Lustschloß* (4.6) and "it is only in the encounter with Emilia in the final scenes – the first time in the play they are actually shown together – that Odoardo seems to regain any of his former authority" (165-66). The eighteenth-century patriarch exhibits the extent of his authority, however, when he takes his own daughter's life (5.7; 465). Gustafson states that this act "reaffirms the paternal fantasy of a virtuous daughter and self-purity . . ." (215).

Nathan der Weise shifts the emphasis "to the father's active role in the preservation of a father-oriented society" (Gustafson 218-19). Saladin comments on Nathan's strength, suggesting Nathan's significant role as patriarch: "Nathans Los ist

diese Schwachheit nicht" (4.4; 557), and Nathan himself tries to assert his patriarchal role in Recha's life when he claims, "(Ich bliebe Recha's Vater/Doch gar zu gern! - Zwar kann ich's denn nicht bleiben, /Auch wenn ich aufhör', es zu heißen?)" (4.7; 562). Because the father stands to lose his daughter, not in death, but in life, the "threat to the patriarchal-Symbolic order and the desire on the part of the daughter and audience to affirm that structure is exponentially accentuated in this play" (Gustafson 217).

Odoardo's position as a surrogate father is recapitulated in *Nathan der Weise*, when the Templar tries to make Nathan his father. After much deliberation about the difference between Jews and Christians throughout *Nathan der Weise*, the Templar eventually realizes that people are people, not religions, and he wishes for Nathan to fulfill the role of substitute father:

> TEMPELHERR. (*nach einer kurzen Pause ihm plötzlich um den Hals fallend)*
> Mein Vater!
>
> NATHAN. - Junger Mann!
>
> TEMPELHERR. *(ihn ebenso plötzlich wieder lassend)* Nicht Sohn? -
> Ich bitt' Euch, Nathan! -
>
> NATHAN. Lieber, junger Mann!
>
> TEMPELHERR.
> Nicht Sohn? - Ich bitt' Euch, Nathan! - Ich beschwör'
> Euch bei den ersten Banden der Natur! -
> Zieht ihnen spätre Fesseln doch nicht vor! -
> Begnügt Euch doch ein Mensch zu sein! - Stoßt mich
> Nicht von Euch! (3.9; 538-39)

When Recha discovers her Christian identity from her servant, Daja, she tells Sittah, the sultan's sister, that she is born of Christian blood and has been baptized. Recha cannot believe she is not Nathan's daughter. Daja has effectively "threatened the stability

of the patriarchal-Symbolic order"(Gustafson 233-34). Yet Recha still considers Nathan as her one true father, despite the lack of blood relation. Recha questions "Aber macht denn nur das Blut / Den Vater? nur das Blut?" Saladin responds "das Blut, das Blut allein / Macht lange noch den Vater nicht!" (5.7; 586-87). Similarly to Appiani's exclamation that Odoardo is the ideal father, Sittah expresses the same in Nathan: "O was ist dein Vater für/ Ein Mann!" (5.6; 583). This comment reaffirms the Templar's, Sittah's, and Saladin's admiration of Nathan as a father (Gustafson 233). Although Recha accepts Nathan as her father, he still loses her physically because she now knows she does not share his genes. Recha acquires a new biological family inclusive of a brother and an uncle, and in the last scenes it is Nathan who is missing from the family paradigm (5.7; 593-94), exhibiting once again that the patriarchal society's demands have ended in loss, not gain.

In each of these domestic tragedies, Lessing establishes father-daughter relationships in which the daughters revere their fathers and the fathers try to maintain control as the eighteenth-century patriarchal society requires. In such a society, the daughters are expected to obey and respect their fathers, and the fathers should protect their daughters from the world. However, each father loses his daughter somehow at the conclusion of the plays. "Being orphaned is the price the fathers pay in order to maintain the illusion" that the patriarchal society's orders function properly and have a "positive effect on culture" (Gustafson 266).

CHAPTER 3

THE ROLE OF THE SUITORS

The fathers and daughters in *Miß Sara Sampson, Emilia Galotti,* and *Nathan der Weise* are strongly connected and love one another deeply. How is it then that a male suitor can usurp the daughter from her father, at least initially? For Sara, it is her love for Mellefont that encourages her rebellion; but why and at what price? Emilia is afraid of rebelling against her father in her desire to be with the Prince, and therefore the only resolution becomes death. Mathäs suggests that, only "after the heroines distance themselves from their fathers are they capable of making a decision as 'autonomous' individuals and 'willfully obey.'" He comments further:

> The conflict arises when the daughters, who have been raised and educated in the spirit of their very protective and caring fathers, have become old enough to marry. Unfortunately, their suitors are not to their liking. If Sara [or the others] were to give in to their passion by simply following their hearts, they would undoubtedly violate the bourgeois moral code of their time which demanded that all members of the household obey the orders of the father. Blind obedience, however, would be inappropriate for the bourgeois individual. While the tragedies [warn] of the dangers of passion resulting from too much individual freedom, they also stress the right of individual self-determination. (43)

Jonnes also argues that the conflict between a daughter and her father is a direct result of the wooer or seducer being seen as more than the father's competitor; rather he is an embodiment of egotism and self-interest (159-60).

For Sara, Mellefont is the suitor who is able to obtain that which the father wishes only he will ever possess – Sara's love. Gustafson notes that the father feels threatened by the loss of his daughter (15), therefore forbidding Sara to be with Mellefont. The forbidden is of course seductive, and Sara breaks from the role of dutiful daughter by leaving with Mellefont. Sara herself admits to the rebel she has become: "Was ist es, dieses rebellische Etwas?" (4.1; 58).

How did Sir William allow "dieses rebellische Etwas" to happen? According to Hart, "he faltered once as patriarch, by failing to detect and act on the developing attraction between Sara and Mellefont . . ." (118). Sir William did not anticipate that if he denied Sara her desires she would leave him. In order to regain her love and possess her once again, Sir William claims he is willing to forgive Sara her mistakes:

> Wenn sie mich noch liebt, so ist ihr Fehler vergessen. Es war der Fehler eines zärtlichen Mädchens, und ihre Flucht war die Wirkung ihrer Reue. Solche Vergehungen sind besser als erzwungene Tugenden - . . . wenn diese Vergehungen auch wahre Verbrechen, wenn es auch vorsätzliche Laster wären: ach! Ich würde ihr doch vergeben. Ich würde doch lieber von einer lasterhaften Tochter als von keiner geliebt sein wollen. (1.1; 6)

In order to restore his world to normalcy, Sir William must become, like Sara and Mellefont, an instrument of love. "Domestic absolutism no longer works . . ."; therefore, Hart claims, "he must either renounce power or reconceive it in terms of the quality that undermined it in the first place, namely (sentimental) love" (119). Gisbert Ter-Nedden suggests that indeed "es geht um eine Liebesgeschichte. [Es geht] ausschließlich um die Liebe seiner Tochter" (52).

However, simply because Sir William finally realizes he must make amends with Sara, this does not prevent Sara's inevitable death. Because of Sara's strong love for

Mellefont, death is the only option. Marwood, Mellefont's ex-lover, will not allow the union between Sara and Mellefont. Mellefont does not tell Sara that Marwood is also at the inn and trying to blackmail him; therefore, as Jonnes points out, "the willful deceptions of the seducer lead to the heroine's death" (161). Marwood brings Sir William to Sara, believing that he will intervene and remove Sara from Mellefont, enabling Marwood to be with Mellefont again. This would certainly ensure Sir William's control over his daughter, but Marwood's plan is thwarted when she discovers from Sara that Sir William has forgiven Sara and Mellefont, and now wishes to be the father of both of them (3.6).

Sara is ultimately the life force by which Sir William lives, which is why he must recoup his daughter's affection and obedience. Sara, "by apparently abandoning the father, seems to strike not only at his composure and authority but at his identity and very capacity for survival" (Jonnes 161). Without Sara in his life, Sir William cannot live. It is, in fact, Sir William who seems to regain his life once he hears of Sara's acceptance of his forgiveness: "Was für Balsam, Waitwell, hast du mir durch deine Erzählung in mein verwundertes Herz gegossen! Ich lebe wieder neu auf; und ihre herannahende Rückkehr scheint mich ebensoweit zu meiner Jugend wieder zurückzubringen, als mich ihre Flucht näher zu dem Grabe gebracht hatte" (3.7; 54).

Yet Sara must be sacrificed in order for Sir William to retain such a life. Mellefont claims that, had he only allowed Marwood to murder him when she intended to, Sara would still be alive, for there would be no reason for Marwood to kill her (5.10; 93). With the loss of Sara, Sir William becomes a new father in Arabella's life (5.10; 92-

94). This time Sir William will remain in control of his new daughter's life. Gustafson recognizes that "Arabella is not the product of Sara's desire for another man, but the child she offers her father in order to confirm the father-daughter dyad" (167). Ultimately Sara sacrifices herself in order to absolve her disobedience to Sir William, giving him a peace-offering in Arabella. As Jonnes argues, "[t]hrough Mellefont and Marwood, Sara is punished for having transgressed the almost sacred bond of the father-daughter relationship" and "Arabella becomes the child that Sara is punished for no longer being" (164).

Emilia's father, Odoardo, is threatened by two men as suitors for his daughter. Odoardo approves of Appiani, whereas he considers the second suitor, the Prince, his real threat. According to Odoardo, Appiani is the ideal man for Emilia; Appiani is in fact a larger threat to Odoardo than the Prince because he will take Emilia away. It is for this reason that Appiani must be eliminated from the eighteenth-century paradigm in order for Lessing to properly exhibit what the patriarchal society encouraged.

Because Appiani wants Odoardo to be his father, Odoardo would seem not to be losing a daughter, but gaining a son. It is Claudia who first expresses her fear of losing Emilia just after Odoardo says how he cannot wait to have Appiani as his son:

> CLAUDIA. Das Herz bricht mir, wenn ich hieran gedenke. - So ganz sollen wir sie verlieren, diese einzige geliebte Tochter?
>
> ODOARDO. Was nennst du, sie verlieren? Sie in den Armen der Liebe zu wissen? Vermenge dein Vergnügen an ihr nicht mit ihrem Glücke.- Du möchtest meinen alten Argwohn erneuern: - daß es mehr das Geräusch und die Zerstreuung der Welt, mehr die Nähe des Hofes war, als die Notwendigkeit, unserer Tochter eine anständige Erziehung zu geben, was dich bewog, hier in der Stadt mit ihr zu bleiben; - fern von einem Manne und Vater, der euch so herzlich liebet.

Odoardo divulges that it was not his wish to have his wife and daughter live so far away from him. Gustafson notes that it is Claudia who has torn Emilia "from her father and jeopardized her purity" (173).

Whereas Appiani wishes to marry Emilia in order to become Odoardo's son, the Prince sees Emilia as a possession one buys. When he receives the painting of her, he says, "Dich hab' ich für jeden Preis noch zu wohlfeil. - . . . [I]st es wahr, daß ich dich besitze?" (1.5; 406). How Emilia feels about the Prince has been a long-running scholarly debate. She should love Appiani without a doubt, and despise and fear the Prince. It is the Prince who separates Emilia from her father the second time, the first separation being Claudia's wish, and it is Mathäs who mentions that neither time is by her own choice. "Nevertheless, her temporary isolation accents her 'independent' resolution not to become the prince's concubine" (43).

Is it indeed clear that Emilia does not wish to be the prince's "concubine"? Early on in the play the audience sees signs of Emilia's true feelings toward the Prince. On her wedding day, she arrives at church to pray, only to find the Prince sitting behind her. Later, when she tells her mother of the incident, she says, "Nie hätte meine Andacht inniger, brünnstiger sein sollen, als heute: nie ist sie weniger gewesen, was sie sein sollte." She claims that sometimes one just does not have the power to pray, to which Claudia replies, "Dem Himmel ist beten wollen, auch beten." Emilia: "Auch sündigen wollen, auch sündigen" (2.6; 418-19). Emilia implies her desire to commit sin with the Prince. Mathäs notes, however, that "[f]or Emilia, the sheer fear of losing her virginity, and therefore becoming unworthy in the eyes of her father, induces her to commit suicide

with the help of her father." As Emilia's comment "wie mein Vater will, daß ich werden soll" (5.7; 464) bespeaks, "she wants to have lived as somebody who conforms exactly to her father's will" (43).

Jonnes remarks that "the breakdown of order, which culminates with the daughter's abduction, coincides with the separation of the father from the daughter" (166). This abduction, planned by the Prince, concludes with Emilia's death. When she is finally united with her father, Emilia assumes the patriarchal role, that of decision-making and assertiveness and the ability to resist. However, in order to make Odoardo believe he is still in control, "she must appear to eliminate her role in a situation which has monumentally placed the father in a position of dependence." Emilia senses she must be eliminated altogether in order to "reaffirm the father's autonomy" (166). The discussion that ensues between Emilia and Odoardo is a climactic one:

> ODOARDO. . . . Besinne dich. - Auch du hast nur *ein* Leben zu verlieren.
>
> EMILIA. Und nur *eine* Unschuld!
>
> ODOARDO. Die über alle Gewalt erhaben ist. -
>
> EMILIA. Aber nicht über alle Verführung. - Gewalt! Gewalt! wer kann der Gewalt nicht trotzen? Was Gewalt heißt, ist nichts: Verführung ist die wahre Gewalt. - Ich habe Blut, mein Vater; so jugendliches, so warmes Blut, als eine. Auch meine Sinne, sind Sinne. Ich stehe für nichts. Ich bin für nichts gut. Ich kenne das Haus der Grimaldi. Es ist das Haus der Freude. Eine Stunde da, unter den Augen meiner Mutter; - und es erhob sich so mancher Tumult in meiner Seele, den die strengsten Übungen der Religion kaum in Wochen besänftigen könnten!" (5.7; 464)

Because of the feelings Emilia admits she might have for the Prince, she must die in order to restore the patriarchal code, for the daughter must not be taken by another man from the father. Emilia wishes to commit suicide, but knows her father will not

allow it. Odoardo states that a dagger is not a hairpin, and upon handing Emilia the dagger takes it back immediately when she tries to stab herself (5.7; 464). In order for Emilia to convince her father to take charge, she must manipulate him into taking responsibility. Jonnes argues that as Emilia reminds Odoardo of the father who saves his daughter from shame by sinking a dagger into her heart, and then says "Solche Väter gibt es keinen mehr" (5.7; 465), "she reproaches the father his lack of resolve. . . . These words, the most forceful of the play, are the strongest statement of Emilia's fundamental motive – the desire for a strong father –, and it is with them that Odoardo stabs her" (167). In *Emilia Galotti*, as in *Miß Sara Sampson*, it is ultimately because of the suitor that the daughter must die, because "it is only finally in death that the submission which authority demands is achieved. . ." (Jonnes 168).

If death is the only way for a daughter to be free of her suitor and not defy her father, why does Recha not die? Perhaps the death of her relationship to Nathan suffices, for Recha also loses her relationship with the Templar. It is the only way for Lessing to save Recha from death, yet still disallow the union between a daughter and her suitor in order to maintain the eighteenth-century patriarchal motif of a father in charge. Perhaps Lessing wanted to make his audience realize that a father-daughter relationship did not have to end in tragedy, specifically death. Jonnes believes that it is significant that "the constitution of a 'closed' father-daughter family unit in *Nathan* [is] broken neither by the marriage nor the death of the daughter." Jonnes also concedes that, as in Lessing's *Miß Sara Sampson* and *Emilia Galotti*, the father-daughter relationship between Recha and Nathan is brought to light by the actions of the suitor (168). And just as Sara seems to be

her father's life source, Recha is the reason that Nathan finds the strength to continue living after his wife and sons are burned to death by the Christians. Nathan experiences feelings of anger and helplessness: "Gezürnt, getobt, mich und die Welt verwünscht; / Der Christenheit den unversöhnlichsten / Haß zugeschworen" (4.7; 566). But these feelings "are transformed into a source of strength at that moment in which Nathan is given the orphaned Recha by the Klosterbruder. She appears to him in almost miraculous response to [a] prayer" (Jonnes 169). Nathan calls out to God, "ich will! / Willst du nur, daß ich will!" (4.7; 567).

Because Nathan has deceived Recha concerning her true birth family and heritage, he ultimately allows the "rivalry between the father and the wooer figures" to take place. The moment the Templar rescues Recha from the flames of her father's house, an act symbolic of an abduction similar to what Sara and Emilia endure, he "represents a source of disturbance" (Jonnes 170). The Templar is a mystery to everyone, as is evident in the identification of him to Nathan: "Er kam, und niemand weiß woher. / Er ging, und niemand weiß wohin" (1.1; 472). However, immediately upon hearing that the Templar has saved Recha, Nathan wants to give the Templar everything, including Recha. Nathan asks Daja, "Ihr gabt ihm doch vors erste, was an Schätzen / Ich euch gelassen hatte? gabt ihm alles? / Verspracht ihm mehr? weit mehr?" (1.1; 472). Like Odoardo, Nathan wishes for his daughter to marry this man who has saved his precious daughter. Because of this desire, something must thwart the acceptance of another man taking the daughter from the father.

Nathan is happy knowing that the Templar took care of Recha as a father would have: “der Vater weit entfernt – / Ihr trugt für ihren guten Namen Sorge; / Floht ihre Prüfung; floht, um nicht zu siegen. / Auch dafür dank’ ich Euch” (2.5; 510). The refusal of the Templar to take anything as a reward from Nathan makes him that much more desirable for both Recha and Nathan, for it shows his inherent goodness. The marriage of Recha and the Templar is condoned by all involved, but because Lessing must not separate the father and the daughter, the blood relation of Recha and the Templar becomes the perfect excuse for the two not to marry.

However, it is the knowledge of her biological family that causes Recha to suffer a symbolic death. When she discovers she was born of a Christian family, revealed by Daja in the hopes that religion will no longer play a role in the decision of the Templar to be with Recha, Recha begins to question what family ties truly are. The relationship of father and daughter between Nathan and Recha must be extinguished in accordance with eighteenth-century codes, and this is Recha’s death compared to Sara’s and Emilia’s. Although Nathan wishes for the Templar to marry his daughter, he must not lose her to another man. Upon learning of the Templar’s biological relation to Recha, losing Recha is no longer a threat to Nathan. This same scenario explains why Recha cannot accept Saladin as her father, for that would break the entire father-daughter paradigm. Although blood relation would give Saladin more claim to Recha because he is her uncle, this would destroy the bond already established between Nathan and Recha. As Sara’s and Emilia’s relationships with their fathers remain intact through death, Recha maintains her relationship with Nathan, whom she has considered her father all of her life.

The strong bonds between fathers and daughters in *Miß Sara Sampson, Emilia Galotti*, and *Nathan der Weise* have their consequences. Because the fathers are unwilling to let go of their daughters, and because the daughters are unwilling to continue to disobey their fathers' wishes, in the end, the daughters must be eliminated either from this world or from the father's life. They are unable to allow suitors in their lives and remain the faithful daughters their fathers desire and require them to be. Ultimately, the suitors' roles in the daughters' lives result in a death of relationships between father and daughter.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE OF THE MOTHERS AND MOTHER FIGURES

In each of Lessing's dramas discussed here, there are two very different influential parties in the daughters' lives. The influence the fathers have on their daughters and how Lessing portrays the father-daughter relationship is the strongest entity in his plays. Where do the mothers enter into the daughters' lives? In *Miß Sara Sampson* and *Nathan der Weise*, there are no mothers, only mother figures. Emilia is the only daughter who knows her mother, Claudia. All of these women play important roles in Sara's, Emilia's and Recha's lives, becoming the negative impetus to the daughters' deaths. Although the women mean no harm to the beloved children, there are other, more evil forces at work. In *Miß Sara Sampson*, Marwood describes herself as Medea (2.7; 34), and in *Emilia Galotti,* the Prince refers to Orsina as having "Medusenaugen" (1.4, 403). Such qualities play a significant role in both Sara's and Emilia's deaths, emphasizing the negative roles established for the women in Lessing's dramas.

Sara never knew her mother, as she explains to Mellefont in a conversation after learning her father wants to make amends:

> MELLEFONT. . . . sehr jung mußte ich den ebenso süßen Namen "Mutter" verlernen -
>
> SARA. Sie haben ihn verlernt, und mir – mir ward es so gut nicht, ihn nur einmal sprechen zu können. Mein Leben war ihr Tod. – Gott! ich ward eine Muttermörderin wieder mein Verschulden. . . . Trauriger Vorwurf, den ich mir ohne Zweifel nicht machen dürfte, wenn eine zärtliche Mutter die Führerin meiner Jugend gewesen wäre! Ihre Lehren, ihr Exempel würden

> mein Herz – So zärtlich blicken Sie mich an, Mellefont? Sie haben recht; eine Mutter würde mich vielleicht mit lauter Liebe tyrannisiert haben, und ich würde Mellefonts nicht sein. (4.1; 58)

Sara laments the lack of a mother. She feels the pain of never having known her, and moreover takes on herself the guilt of her mother's death. However, for the last nine weeks that Sara has been with Mellefont, she has not been without a mother figure. Mellefont has provided her with the servant Betty, who supports Sara emotionally during the flight from her father. At the inn, the audience has the opportunity to see the first mother figure Sara has had in Betty.

Betty acts initially as a mother to Sara in Act I, when Sara has a foreshadowing nightmare of dying at the hands of another woman. As a young child will run to her mother for comfort, Sara goes to Betty. (Upon realizing Sara's state, Betty goes to Mellefont and asks him to see Sara, taking care of Sara's needs as a mother would of a child's.) Sara asks Betty to tell Mellefont to receive her, and as a good mother would console a child, Betty consoles and helps Sara (1.4; 9-10). Later in the play, after Waitwell has visited Sara, she wishes to share the letter from Sir William with Betty:

> SARA. Was für einen zärtlichen Brief will ich dich lesen lassen! Dein gutes Herz hat so oft mit mir geweint, nun soll es sich auch mit mir freuen. Ich werde wieder glücklich sein und dich für deine guten Dienste belohnen können
>
> BETTY. Was habe ich Ihnen in kurzen neun Wochen für Dienste leisten können?
>
> SARA. Du hättest mir ihrer in meinem ganzen anderen Leben nicht mehrere leisten können als in diesen neun Wochen. – Sie sind vorüber! – . . . (3.7; 54)

Sara previously mentioned the same nine weeks to Mellefont: "Aber die neunte Woche, Mellefont, die neunte Woche fängt heute an . . ." (1.7; 11). Peter Pütz ascribes

importance to this temporal reference: the "Zahlenangabe läßt assoziieren, daß die Zeit (mit metaphorischer Anspielung auf die Schwangerschaft) erfüllt sein sollte . . ." (119). The relevance to pregnancy can be seen as two-fold, for not only does Betty stay with Sara for nine weeks, parallel to the nine months it takes to carry a child, Sara dies at the end of the nine weeks, as her own mother died at the end of the nine months it took to carry her. Both Betty and Sara thus take the place of Sara's mother; Betty becomes the mother that does not die, and Sara takes her mother's place in death.

It is also this death that imitates the life of Sara's mother, only the roles are reversed. Sara unintentionally caused her mother's death, and Betty unknowingly is the hand that murders Sara. Thinking she is administering helpful smelling salts, Betty gives Sara the poison that Marwood switched with the salts. Finally realizing this (5.7; 87), Betty leaves the room, unable to witness her own destruction of Sara. Although Betty became a mother figure toward the end of Sara's life, she also was the one who brought Sara death.

Betty, however, cannot compare to the negative force of Marwood in *Miß Sara Sampson*. Marwood uses her own daughter as a pawn in her life with Mellefont; Arabella becomes a bargaining chip. Marwood is not only compared to Medea, but also the devil. The devil knows one's weaknesses and uses that as a tool to "seduce" one into doing something one might not normally do. Marwood's comments to Hannah indicate the same actions on her part: "Nachsicht, Liebe, Bitten sind die einzigen Waffen, die ich wider ihn brauchen darf, wo ich anders seine schwache Seite recht kenne" (2.1; 20). Marwood's evil side comes into focus when Mellefont refuses to come back to her:

MELLEFONT. . . . Begnügen Sie sich also nur, mich um mein väterliches Erbteil gebracht zu haben, und lassen mich ein weit geringeres mit einer würdigeren Gattin genießen.

MARWOOD. Ha! Nun seh ich's, was dich eigentlich so trotzig macht. . . . Rechne darauf, daß ich alles anwenden will, dich zu vergessen. Und das erste, was ich in dieser Absicht tun werde, soll dieses sein – . . . Zittre für deine Bella! . . . Sieh in mir eine neue Medea!

MELLEFONT. *(erschrocken).* Marwood –

MARWOOD. Oder wenn du noch eine grausamere Mutter weißt, so sieh sie gedoppelt in mir! Gift und Dolch sollen mich rächen. Doch nein, Gift und Dolch sind zu barmherzige Werkzeuge! Sie würden dein und mein Kind zu bald töten. Ich will es nicht gestorben sehen, ich will es sterben sehen! . . . Ich will mit begieriger Hand Glied von Glied, Ader von Ader, Nerve von Nerve lösen und das Kleinste derselben auch da noch nicht aufhören zu schneiden und zu brennen, wenn es schon nichts mehr sein wird als ein empfindungsloses Aas. . . . (2.7; 34-35)

As Simonetta Sanna argues in her article concerning the Medea figures in Lessing's works, Mellefont is the Jason figure, Marwood is Medea, and Sara is the young lover, Cordelia. "Schon in seiner ersten Gestaltung des Medea-Mythos legt Lessing also Gewicht auf die Wesensverwandschaft zwischen Kreusa und Medea. Medeas Schicksal ist der gemeinsame Fluchtpunkt der beiden Frauen: für Marwood als Gegenwart, für Sara als Zukunft" (47). Gustafson concurs that Arabella "represents the irrefutable sign of the corporeal mutilation of her father" and that "Marwood's violence marks the body of the daughter as a remnant of the maternal and as evidence of the maternal fury that is perceived to exact its onslaught upon the patriarchal-Symbolic order" (154).

Marwood not only plays the role of Medea, she also asserts herself as a devilish character, bringing chaos to all and slipping away unnoticed. When Marwood is alone, waiting for Sara, she alludes to her own character traits:

> Kann ich unbemerkt einmal Atem schöpfen und die Muskeln des Gesichts in ihre natürliche Lage fahren lassen? - Ich muß geschwind einmal in allen Mienen die wahre Marwood sein, um den Zwang der Verstellung wieder aushalten zu können. . . . Still! Sie kommen. Ich bin nun nicht mehr Marwood; ich bin eine nichtswürdige Verstoßene . . . ein getretner Wurm . . . . (4.5; 66)

While Sara meets with Marwood, thinking Marwood is Mellefont's relative, Sara eventually identifies the true Marwood and states unknowingly what her own fate will be. As Marwood reveals Arabella's existence and claims that Mellefont still loves only her (Marwood), Sara says, "Sie töten mich, Lady!" (4.8; 74), a premonition of the events that will soon follow. Sara understands how she will die, when she finally becomes assertive with Marwood: "Das geht zu weit! . . . Nun merke ich es, Lady, warum er Sie so ungern bei mir allein lassen wollte. Er mag es schon wissen, wieviel man von Ihrer Zunge zu fürchten habe. Eine giftige Zunge! . . . (4.8; 76). Sara's dream from the first act of the play, in which she saw someone similar to herself killing her, comes back to haunt her as she accuses Marwood of being the one with the dagger. Sara does not know that Marwood has already lost the dagger she brought with her when she tried to attack Mellefont (2.7; 35); therefore, Marwood must resort to other means: the poison that Sara identifies as the characteristic of her tongue. However, it is Mellefont who describes Marwood in terms of the devil, wishing Hell will follow her everywhere she goes: "Sie ist fort? – Wohin? – Unglück und Tod und, wo möglich, die ganze Hölle möge sich auf ihrem Wege finden! Verzehrend Feuer donnre der Himmel auf sie herab, und unter ihr breche die Erde ein, der weiblichen Ungeheuer größtes zu verschlingen!" (5.5; 84). Yet upon Sara's death, it is not the evil Marwood (whom she has forgiven) that she speaks of, rather it is Betty, her surrogate mother, and Sir William, her father (5.10; 92). It is the

fantasy of another unified family (herself, her father, Arabella and Mellefont), however, that allows Sara at last to die (Gustafson 166).

The same fate comes to Emilia, but by another's hand, her own father's. There are many forces vying for attention in *Emilia Galotti*, and it is eventually the negative that wins, once again. How Lessing reconciles the existence of a biological mother, coupled with the fact that the father does not live with the family, becomes evident at the climax of the play. Odoardo sends Claudia away without seeing Emilia (4.8; 454), punishing her as it were for desiring too much to be a part of "high society," under the pretense that it will benefit Emilia to live in the city rather than in the country with her loving father (2.4; 416).

Until the point where Odoardo takes control over both his wife's and his daughter's lives, Claudia and Emilia are very close. There are many instances in which Emilia feels the necessity to speak with her mother in order to assuage her own worries. For example, when Emilia comes back from church, she is still reeling from her encounter with the Prince, and she eventually divulges all to Claudia (2.6; 420). Not having had her father around, Emilia has come to rely on the wisdom of her mother: "Sie wissen, meine Mutter, wie gern ich Ihrer bessern Einsicht mich in allem unterwerfe. – Ich habe keinen Willen gegen Ihrigen." Conversation with her mother is also healing: "Aha! *(Mit einem tiefen Atemzuge.)* Auch wird mir wieder ganz leicht" (2.6; 421).

Emilia's connection to her mother becomes particularly apparent after they are abducted on the road by Marinelli's bandits. Emilia, having been "rescued," cries out, "Aber Gott, Gott! wo bin ich? – Und so ganz allein? Wo bleibt meine Mutter? Wo blieb

der Graf?" It is her mother she asks about first, and shortly thereafter when Marinelli enters the room and a discussion of what could have happened ensues, Emilia fears the worst: "Aber ich erschrecke, mich allein gerettet zu sehen. Meine Mutter ist noch in der Gefahr. Hinter uns ward sogar geschossen. Sie ist vielleicht tot; – und ich lebe?" (3.4; 433). Emilia fears living without her mother in her life.

The question then becomes, why does Odoardo blame Claudia for everything that has happened? He sees a side of Claudia that Emilia only sees as her mother, not a woman entranced by the upper-class society. When Claudia first tells Odoardo that the Prince has already seen Emilia, Odoardo is troubled:

> ODOARDO. . . . Dazu bedenkest du nicht, Claudia, daß durch unsere Tochter er es vollends mit dem Prinzen verderbt. Der Prinz haßt mich -
>
> CLAUDIA. Vielleicht weniger, als du besorgest.
>
> ODOARDO. Besorgest! Ich besorg' auch so was!
>
> CLAUDIA. Denn hab' ich dir schon gesagt, daß der Prinz unsere Tochter gesehen hat?
>
> ODOARDO. Der Prinz? Und wo das?
>
> CLAUDIA. In der letzten Vegghia, bei dem Kanzler Grimaldi, die er mit seiner Gegenwart beehrte. Er bezeigte sich gegen sie so gnädig - -
>
> ODOARDO. So gnädig?
>
> CLAUDIA. Er unterhielt sich mit ihr so lange - -
>
> ODOARDO. Unterhielt sich mit ihr?
>
> CLAUDIA. Schien von ihrer Munterkeit und ihrem Witze so bezaubert - -
>
> ODOARDO. So bezaubert?

CLAUDIA. Hat von ihrer Schönheit mit so vielen Lobeserhebungen gesprochen --

ODOARDO. Lobeserhebungen? Und das alles erzählst du mir in einem Tone der Entzückung? O Claudia! eitle, törichte Mutter! (2.4; 417)

Although Claudia does nothing directly to harm Emilia, it is because of Claudia's decision to live in the city, separated from her husband, closer to the upper class, that Emilia has the opportunity at all to meet the Prince. This is the ultimate reason Emilia's death must occur.

By whose hand does Emilia die? Her father sinks the dagger into her heart, yet it is Orsina who gives Odoardo the dagger. Gustafson notes that Orsina shares some of Marwood's Medea qualities and that both women are associated with Medusa. She discusses that "Marwood's mother eyes evinced a desire and hellish seduction which immobilized Mellefont . . . ." and Orsina is another figure who is placed "in the ranks of threatening mothers and mother figures" (189). Orsina's wish is that Odoardo kill the Prince with the dagger she bestows upon him, and she convinces Odoardo that it was the Prince who orchestrated the murder of Appiani. Orsina even mentions that "Gift ist nur für uns Weiber; nicht für Männer. Nehmen Sie ihn *(Ihm den Dolch aufdringend.)*." It is in this quote that one is reminded of the Medea figure in *Miß Sara Sampson.* Marwood tried to kill Mellefont with a dagger, and she killed Sara with poison, thus reinforcing Orsina's claim. Orsina thus seems to entice Odoardo to protect Emilia's honor, not murder her (4.7; 452-53). However, Emilia is the reason that the Prince no longer has affection for Orsina, giving Orsina an impetus to destroy Emilia, whether by having the Prince killed, or Emilia herself. It is, in fact, Orsina who claims, "das Wort Zufall ist

Gotteslästerung. Nichts unter der Sonne ist Zufall . . .” (4.2; 445). If we take Orsina at her word, it is certainly no coincidence that Odoardo kills Emilia and not the Prince.

Nathan der Weise is different from the two other dramas in that there is no real Medea or Medusa figure. There is, however, a mother figure who has been with Recha most of her life. Daja, Recha’s servant, knows more about Recha than Recha knows about herself, which is how Daja becomes a negative entity in Recha’s life. Yet there are several instances when Daja acts as a mother, and even possibly as Nathan’s surrogate wife. In a play engulfed in different religions that are unable to find compromise, Daja is a Christian taking care of a Jewish girl in a land dominated by the Muslims. Although Daja eventually shows her discomfort with Nathan having raised a Christian-born girl as a Jew, she never lets that deter her from being a motherly figure to Recha.

In Act I, it is already evident how much Daja cares for both Nathan and Recha. She runs to Nathan immediately as he returns home from a long trip and tells him of the ordeals they have been through while he has been away. Daja exhibits wifely qualities, even becoming quarrelsome with Nathan. Although he can see for himself that his house has burned, he tries to guess what happened to Recha, not allowing Daja to speak. When Nathan speaks of “meine Recha,” Daja reprimands him:

DAJA. Eure? Eure Recha?

NATHAN. Wenn ich mich wieder je entwöhnen müßte,
Dies Kind mein Kind zu nennen!

DAJA. Nennt Ihr alles,
Was Ihr besitzt, mit ebensoviel Rechte
Das Eure? (1.1; 469-70)

Through this confrontation, Lessing establishes a full family paradigm, complete with mother, father, and daughter. Nathan and Daja act as two parents discussing their child.

Daja, in contrast to Betty, has been part of Recha's life since Recha was a baby. The manner in which Recha speaks to her is clearly the speech of a surrogate daughter. Nathan declares the Templar to be human rather than an angel, and wonders if he will return. Nathan tries to portray the Templar's human side by hinting he might be terribly sick, which frightens Recha. Recha says to Daja, "Welch kalter Schauer / Befällt mich! - Daja! - Meine Stirne, sonst / So warm, fühl'! ist auf einmal Eis" (1.2; 478). Here Recha acts as the ill child, asking her mother to feel her head. As the conversation about the Templar continues, Nathan paints a more serious picture and Daja tries to protect Recha from harsh words: "Schonet ihrer, Nathan! . . . Hört auf, und seht! . . . Hört auf! / Ihr tötet sie!" (1.2; 479).

Without Nathan around, Daja and Recha discuss love and Recha's future, as a mother and daughter would do before the daughter is to marry. Daja expresses her wish for Recha's future. This is followed by a discussion not unlike that of an argument between a mother and her daughter:

DAJA. Mein, mein Wunsch wird dann
An des erfüllten Stelle treten; meiner.
Mein Wunsch, dich in Europa, dich in Händen
Zu wissen, welche deiner würdig sind.

RECHA. Du irrst. - Was diesen Wunsch zu deinem macht,
Das nämliche verhindert, daß er meiner
Je werden kann. Dich zieht dein Vaterland:
Und meines, meines sollte mich nicht halten? . . .

DAJA. Sperre dich, so viel du willst!
Des Himmels Wege sind des Himmels Wege. . . .

RECHA. Daja!
Was sprichst du da nun wieder, liebe Daja! . . .
–Wenn mein Vater dich so hörte! –
Was tat er dir, mir immer nur mein Glück
So weit von ihm als möglich vorzuspiegeln?
Was tat er dir, den Samen der Vernunft,
Den er so rein in meine Seele streute
Mit deines Landes Unkraut oder Blumen
So gern zu mischen? - Liebe, liebe, Daja
Er will nun deine bunten Blumen nicht
Auf meinem Boden! Und ich muß dir sagen,
Ich selber fühle meinen Boden, wenn
Sie noch so schön so kleidet, so entkräftet,
So ausgezehrt durch deine Blume; fühle
In ihrem Dufte, sauersüßem Dufte,
Mich so betäubt, so schwindelnd! (3.1; 518-19)

"The weeds of maternal fantasy choke the flowers of paternal rationality. The father-daughter dyad assures the daughter's felicitous 'blooming,' the mother's intervention, her intrusion, her subversion of the father-daughter dyad causes the daughter's mind to 'wither'" (Gustafson 234). There are other instances in which Daja expresses her motherly concerns for Recha. In her conversation with the Templar, when she reveals to him that Recha is not Nathan's biological daughter, she speaks of a pain that mothers often feel: "Die Wahrheit, die so oft mich blut'ge Tränen weinen machen" (3.10; 544). Daja, unable to be separated from her, also wishes to go with Recha to Europe if that is where the Templar intends to take her (3.10; 545). Although Recha never knew her mother, Daja has provided the emotional support only a mother can give.

Interestingly, it is this very mother figure that becomes the reason for Recha's distress. Because Daja wants to see her surrogate daughter gain love despite a difference in religious beliefs, she divulges Recha's true heritage. However, Recha is upset with Daja, not Nathan. Recha arrives at the Sultan's house and speaks with Saladin and his

sister, Sittah. Recha is troubled and wonders about the future of her relationship with Nathan as her father. Within Recha's conversation with Sittah, the audience hears what she thinks of Daja now:

> SITTAH. Ein andrer Vater? aufgedrungen? dir?
> Wer kann das? kann das auch nur wollen, Liebe?
>
> RECHA. Wer? Meine gute böse Daja kann
> Das wollen, - will das können. - Ja; du kennst
> Wohl diese gute böse Daja nicht?
> Nun, Gott vergeb' es ihr! - belohn' es ihr!
> Sie hat mir so viel Gutes, - so viel Böses
> Erwiesen!
>
> SITTAH. Böses dir? - So muß sie Gutes
> Doch wahrlich wenig haben.
>
> RECHA. Doch! recht viel!
> Recht viel!
>
> SITTAH. Wer ist sie?
>
> RECHA. Eine Christin, die
> In meiner Kindheit mich gepflegt; mich so
> Gepflegt! - Du glaubst nicht! - Die mir eine Mutter
> So wenig missen lassen! - Gott vergelt'
> Es ihr! - Die aber mich auch so geängstet!
> Mich so gequält! (5.6; 584)

Recha still feels love for Daja because she was often there to comfort her so that she hardly missed having a mother, and yet she was also the one to shatter Recha's beliefs about her entire life. She is astounded at the pain Daja has caused, not once mentioning that her father is to blame for not telling her she was adopted. Lessing presents the mother figure negatively, as seen within the eighteenth-century patriarchal paradigm, and as somehow involved in the deaths of the daughters' relationships.

Eventually the audience becomes aware that indeed religion plays no part for Nathan in the decision that he does not want Recha to marry the Templar. Nathan discovers they are brother and sister, a union that would not be allowed or desired. Although the father-daughter relationship is initially destroyed by the knowledge that Nathan adopted Reach, it is restored at the conclusion of the play, and the father must not endure losing his daughter to another man through marriage. In the last scene of Act 5, Nathan and Recha express their love for one another as Nathan questions, "bist doch meine Tochter noch?" Recha responds, "Mein Vater!", and Nathan exclaims, "Dein Vater ist Dir unverloren!" (588). In spite of Recha and Nathan retaining their familial ties with words, Nathan is not a part of the final scene in *Nathan der Weise*. Recha's new biological family becomes the focus as the play comes to an end. Conceivably this is Lessing's way of demonstrating to the audience that even in a patriarchal society, the daughter can prevail and the relationships may remain intact.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In Lessing's dramas, *Miß Sara Sampson, Emilia Galotti,* and *Nathan der Weise*, Lessing shows the audience the tragedy that lurks within the patriarchal system as it is. As the tragedies unfold, it becomes evident that the daughters and other female figures are fighting a battle they will be unable to win. By depicting the negative aspect of the mothers and mother figures, Lessing characterizes the eighteenth-century society as one in which the male is purely dominant, and the female has little chance of positively influencing her daughter.

In *Emilia Galotti* and *Nathan der Weise*, both Claudia and Daja are more often with Emilia and Recha than Odoardo and Nathan are. However, if the patriarchal code is abided, it is the desire to please and obey the father that creates the gap between the daughter and the mother or surrogate mother in her life. Although these mother figures play important roles in the daughters' lives, it is the fathers who influence the daughters' ultimate decisions. The mother or mother figures may be a positive entity in the daughters' lives throughout each play, but Lessing shows in the end that in their society it is the woman who has no control over her situation, unless she is an evil figure.

In Lessing's domestic tragedies, the fathers struggle to keep their daughters in their lives, yet this becomes impossible as the Medea/Medusa characters infiltrate the scene. However it is not by Marwood's or Orsina's own hands that the daughters die,

rather they die by the hands of their loved ones and protectors. A daughter's disobedience, even in thought or intent, brings consequences, and Sara and Emilia fall victim to the bitter consequences of an unyielding father-daughter paradigm. Yet Recha has not disobeyed her father; she is therefore rewarded at the end of *Nathan der Weise* with the knowledge of her new family, while at the same time remaining Nathan's daughter. As the Templar suggests in the last scene, he and Recha may have lost one love, but they gained a greater one (592).

Sir William, Odoardo, and Nathan all lose their daughters in some fashion, but they are successful in disallowing any other man to own their daughters. There are no marriages that take place in Lessing's domestic tragedies because as a father protecting his daughter, as is his patriarchal duty, no man who is unworthy shall possess her love. Yet for Sara, Emilia and Recha, the paradigm of the eighteenth-century patriarchal society leaves no room for mistakes. Lessing's depiction of such a society demonstrates how the female figures must either strive to please the conventions of society or pay the ultimate price with their lives. Lessing effectively reveals the truth behind the society of the eighteenth century: the father's control of the family accomplishes its demise.

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