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A woman becomes poeta laureata

A disruptive event in the literary discourse of the early German Enlightenment; Christiana Mariana von Ziegler and Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann

Abstract The female poets Christiana Mariana von Ziegler and Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann were crowned (in 1733 and 1738) with the laurel wreath for their famous poetic works. These honours were given by the universities of Wittenberg and Göttingen even though women were not admitted to universities at the time. Ziegler and Zäunemann wrote poetry of very high quality in the German language of the period. Both women tried to motivate other women to write poetry. In this paper we would like to present the literary discourse around the laureation of the two female poets and consider the disruptive potentials these events and the women themselves evoked.

Keywords poeta laureata, German Enlightenment, literary discourse, disruptive event

1. Introduction

Sie knirschen mit dem Mund wenn unsre Lorbeer blühn,
Und suchen uns den Ruhm durch Lästern zu entziehn.
(Zäunemann 2020, p. 78)

They grind with their mouth when our laurel blooms,
And try to withdraw our honour from us by making derisive remarks.¹

The German poet, Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann (1711–1740), wrote these verses after being recognized with the laurel wreath, the greatest honour in poetry at the time. This quote leads us back to the 18th century and to the time of the early Enlightenment. The phenomenon of a female laureation is the focus of this paper.

Christiana Mariana von Ziegler (1695–1760) and Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann are two cases of interest we are going to study. Both women received their honour of the degree of poeta laureata from the universities of Wittenberg and Göttingen. We would like to analyse the role of these two female poets as social actors for disruption, consider how they caused this disruption and in what ways we can describe it. Through this act and their self-determined behaviour, they caused disruption in different ways. We want to ask if the awarding of women with the laurel wreath can be interpreted as a disruptive event in the scientific and literary world, and if yes, why.

As we are talking about historical events, our main method to approach this disruptive event is to consider the written data which was preserved from the time. Therefore, the disruptive events we are treating are at the same time disruptive and discursive. Even when the actual event and the clear disruption were situated in the past, we can still come back

1 To keep the original German text on the one hand and to make the content of the texts available on the other hand, we decided to translate the citations into English.

to the disruptive discourse that these events caused. Through the help of letters and their responses, poems, orders or instructions we can try to reconstruct the social and disruptive situation and the different social actors who were involved.

Before we dive into the details about this specific discourse around female laureations, we would like to present our perceptions of this discourse. We conceive discourse as a super-structure of language (Warnke 2013, p. 85), more concrete: discourse is seen as a product of language (“sprachliches Produkt”) which combines the totality of intertextually linked products being in transtextual relationships to each other (ibid., p. 78). In this specific historic context, all examples of language (poems, letters, cited answers) have to be mentioned as part of the discourse combined with the knowledge about the historical contexts and other information from the time. Like Hermanns (1995, p. 77) says, text could show the totality of habits or disposals of thinking, feeling and what individuals of a certain time period want to do and what they should do in social groups which form all together the mentality of a specific society.

Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann’s poem from 1737 about her visit to the Ilmenau mine could serve as an example of a disruptive discourse.² The poem evoked a discussion and is part of a discourse about which female behaviour was convenient. Her letter, a *Sendschreiben an den Priester* (‘letter to the priest’) (Zäunemann 1738b, pp. 593–596), reflected that at least one priest did not appreciate her poem and started a discourse with disruptive potential, because it was unusual and normally not allowed for a woman of this time to go into a mine. The fact that Zäunemann went into the Ilmenau mine is the disruptive event, the fact that she wrote explicitly about it is a main part of this discourse, which goes beyond this and is part of another larger discourse about which fields of interest were appropriate for women. In this context, the female poet and her adversaries are social actors.

In the context of the event of the female laureation, there are different disruptive aspects to mention. There were certain social actors involved, such as the female poets themselves, the representatives of the university, but also the students who were not accepting the laureation of women. The fact that women received the laurel wreath caused disruption because universities were, at the time, still a place without female participation. Women were not allowed to study and therefore participate in the literary and intellectual exchange of discourse in this part of society.³

Regarding the laureation process as a disruptive event in the scientific and literary world, we can state that not only the laureation process was disruptive. The women and their works evoked disruptive events and so also disruptive discourse. It is our aim to present how the society of the early German Enlightenment was handling, adapting, or suppressing disruptive events which were caused by two independently acting women.

Honouring a poet with a crown made from laurel has a long tradition going back to antiquity. As Flood (2006, p. iiv) says: “The praise of kings by poets must be as old as the concept of monarchy itself and needs no justification or exemplification.” As a reward for their work and as acknowledgement, the Kings or Emperors offered money, symbolic gifts or a title. The symbol of the crown also appears in the Bible and was seen as a symbol of immortality (ibid., p. iv). In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, “crown, chaplet or wreath” were seen as “a mark of distinction for an individual, meritorious poet” (ibid., p. ivi). The concept and realization of laureation is securely attested for the years around 1200 when Gottfried von Straßburg praises Hartmann von Aue in his work *Tristan* (ibid., p. ivii). The most

2 You can find her poem, *Das Ilmenauische Bergwerk*, in the edition of Zäunemanns works (2020).

3 But women were able to find other places for intellectual exchange, for example literary circles.

influential laureation was that of Petrarch on Easter day, 8 April 1341 at the Capitol in Rome (ibid., p. ixiv).

Writers such as Andreas Gryphius (1616–64), Paul Fleming (1609–40), and Martin Opitz (1597–1639), to mention three of the best known, were all imperial poets laureate, bearing the proud title *Poeta Laureatus Caesareus*. (Flood 2007, p. 4)

Laureations could be performed by different persons or institutions. The Emperor himself or Counts Palatine⁴ or even some universities (Flood 2006, p. cxxxvi) could choose the poet. The coronation of a poet is a symbolic act. This is reflected by the insignia which are given to the poet (Flood 2006, p. xcix and Flood 2007, pp. 7–8): first of all, the laurel wreath, a scepter, a ring⁵, a cap (sort of a doctor's beret) which visualized the fact that the title was seen as sort of equivalent to that of a magister or doctor. The title included the right to teach at any university. This aspect of the laureation brought problems up concerning the laureation of women because they were not allowed to be part of the university at that time. When the laureation was made by the Emperor, there was one task: to swear an oath of loyalty to him and his house.

2. Dimensions of disruptive events

Lars Koch, Tobias Nanz and Johannes Pause (2016, pp. 18–20) present in their paper *Imaginationen der Störung. Ein Konzept* ('Imaginations of the Disruption. A Concept') the following three dimensions of disruption: *Sollbruchstörungen* ('predetermined points of disruption'), *Adaptive Störungen* ('adaptive disruptions') and *Überlastungsstörungen* ('disruptions of overloading').

Sollbruchstörungen are disruptions which can happen at any time, but the society knows how to handle them and has a certain routine concerning this type of disruption. The factor of predetermination means that the society can calculate the disruption (ibid., pp. 18–20). In the case of Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann, we can talk of a *Sollbruchstörung* because her visit of the mine and her poem about it found no female followers. Her action had no consequences for the society. Zäunemann was seen as a "Wunderthier" by her contemporaries (Dziudza/Klimek 2022). Parts of the society accepted her intrusion in a male domain, others did not and complained in letters (for ex. 'the letter of the priest'). However, it changed nothing for the society.

The crowning of a woman with the laurel wreath could be seen as an adaptive disruption (*adaptive Störung*), which is a disruption that can be productively used by the society. This means that there is a potential that knowledge can be distributed, and the society can learn something from the disruption (Koch/Nanz/Pause 2016, pp. 18–20). The honour of the laurel wreath for Ziegler and Zäunemann had a certain impact on the society, at least in literary circles, and drew some attention to the crowned women which thus motivated other women to write poetry.⁶ As for one result, Ziegler became a member of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft*,⁷ and for Zäunemann there at least was a plan to also invite her to participate

4 Philipp von Zesen and Sigmund von Birken were also laureating in this context (Flood 2006, p. cxxviii, concerning von Birken see also Otto 1981, pp. 498 f.). Both were principals of some of the so-called German *Sprachgesellschaften* ('societies of language').

5 "[S]ignifying the poet's marriage to the Muses" (Flood 2007, p. 7).

6 Christiana Mariana von Ziegler was the first women to receive the laureal crown from a university and referred in one of her speeches to her role model the famous Italian physician Laura Bassi (Dziudza 2022b, p. 209). Zäunemann motivated other women to write poetry like she did (Dziudza 2020, p. 184).

7 We will give more details about this fact in the following chapter.

in this society (Döring 2002, p. 251). Being connected to the history of the societies of language is one step becoming part of the cultural memory of the society.

The third type of disruption by Koch/Nanz/Pause (2016, pp. 18–20), the *Überlastungsstörung*, is not relevant for our case study because neither of the women created trauma for society. Disruptions of overloading can destabilize an entire country, something which was never threatened by the women who were crowned with the laurel wreath.

The three types of disruptions were developed in response to the context of security politics in our present societies, but we would like to transfer these (post)modern dimensions to 18th-century society and discuss the two women and the disruptive discourse of their laureation in the following.

3. Christiana Mariana von Ziegler – the first poeta laureata

Christiana Mariana von Ziegler was the first poeta laureata in German-speaking lands crowned by a university. At this time, she was a famous Salonnière and therefore a social actor in the cultural life of Leipzig. She is a remarkable representative of European early Enlightenment feminism.

She was born in Leipzig in 1695 as a daughter of the famous Romanus-family, a family of jurists in Leipzig. Her large fortune and enormous freedom were the result of being two times widowed. She established a sophisticated salon in Leipzig, where the intellectual and artistic elite of the city went in and out, for example, Johann Christoph Gottsched⁸ and Johann Sebastian Bach (Dziudzia 2022b, p. 206). Ziegler was gifted with musical talent herself and she knew how to organise social events and how to network.⁹

Zieglers comparison with the famous French poet and Salonnière Madeleine de Scudéry¹⁰ was obvious, because she had translated Scudéry's *Conversations Morales* into German. Ziegler became important as a learned woman in Leipzig and beyond the borders of the city. Being a writer and leading her own salon, she was a pioneer. Ziegler became a role model for other women writers, including Zäunemann.

In her early 40s, Ziegler married again and this time to a professor of law, Wolf Balthasar Adolf von Steinwehr. Together they moved from Leipzig to Frankfurt an der Oder, where her literary activity ended.

Ziegler published love poems under her own name, something not even men oftentimes dared to do. She also wrote satirical poems, for example the song *Das männliche Geschlechte im Namen einiger Frauenzimmer besungen* ('The male sex sung in the name of some women').¹¹ She published letters called *Moralische und vermischte Send-Schreiben* ('moral and miscellaneous messages'), in which she answers questions, for example, of a worried mother who seeks advice because her daughter is more interested in the sciences than in marriage (Ziegler 2019, pp. 9–11).

8 Gottsched was promoted by Ziegler as a young man (Dröse 2019, p. 203). "Johann Sebastian Bach turned nine of her religious poems into cantatas" (Flood 2006, p. 2308).

9 For more information about Ziegler's life, see Dröse (2019, pp. 202–208).

10 Of the many publications on Madeleine de Scudéry we would only like to mention some, like Kroll (1996), Koloch (1999) or Hergenhan (2015).

11 The English literal translations of the work titles are our own translations, if not differently marked (KR and KW).

Ziegler received literary recognition. In 1730 she was accepted as the first and only female member of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft* ('German Society'), a society under the control of Gottsched, for her work in maintaining the German language based on the model of the *Académie française*. The admission of Ziegler into the *Deutsche Gesellschaft* is quite contradictory: Indeed, the society wanted to support women, but it also suited their 'image' and political program to have a woman who wrote poetry among their ranks. In her inaugural speech in front of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft*, Ziegler addressed the decision of the "hochzu-ehrende Herren" (ibid., p. 129) ('honourable gentlemen') as a dangerous one which could provoke disapproval and scorn. She also asked in her speech:

Mit was für ausbündigen Beweisgründen spricht man nicht hier und da dem sämtlichen deutschen Frauenvolk die Fähigkeit und Geschicklichkeit, gelehrten Wissenschaften nachzuhängen, ernstlich ab? Beherzigen Sie also wohl, was sie tun, meine Herren!
(ibid., p. 131)

What kind of outlandish arguments do they use here and there to seriously deny all German women the ability and skill to pursue learned sciences? So take heed of what you do, gentlemen!

Ziegler stood up for female education: Under the title *Abhandlung, ob es dem Frauenzimmer erlaubt sei, sich nach Wissenschaften zu bestreben?* ('Essay on the question if women are allowed to pursue the sciences?') she argued with the *égalité de sexe* ('gender equality') – the ideas of the Enlightenment. She also presented this essay in front of the *Deutsche Gesellschaft*. At the beginning of this text Ziegler states that she supports the German language:

Ich bemühe mich ebenfalls, den Wert der deutschen Sprache emporzubringen. Ich übe mich, nach Ihrem Geschmacke Deutsch zu sprechen und zu schreiben. Ich richte mich nach den vorgeschriebenen Regeln; kurz: Meine Absichten stimmen mit den Ihrigen vollkommen überein. (Ziegler 2019, p. 138)

I also endeavour to raise the value of the German language. I practise speaking and writing German according to your taste. I follow the prescribed rules; in short, my intentions are in perfect harmony with yours.

Then she speaks of women and the sciences:

Man wird auch kein Gesetz anführen können, welches die Weiber ausschließt, der Weisheit nachzugehen, die man durch Wissenschaften erlangen kann. Doch ist zu beklagen, dass so bald sich nur ein edler Trieb zu der und jener Wissenschaft, bei einem oder dem anderen Frauenzimmer äußert; sobald es die Feder ergreift [...], es sich harthen Urteilen, Lästern, Schmähen, und den empfindlichsten Begegnungen ausgesetzt sehen muss. (Ziegler 2019, p. 140)

Nor will it be possible to cite any law which excludes women from pursuing the wisdom that can be acquired through the sciences. But it is to be lamented that as soon as a noble instinct for this or that science manifests itself in one woman or another, as soon as she takes up the pen [...] she must find herself exposed to harsh judgement, blasphemy, vilification, and the most sensitive encounters.

It is this "harsh judgement, blasphemy and vilification" that Ziegler experienced herself when she was crowned poeta laureata in 1733 by the University of Wittenberg.¹² Her coronation as a poeta laureata produced a scandal. She became a target of sexist polemics, both in poems and images. Many of the male scholars and students did not want to have a woman as a member of the university-community, or even more, to be taught by one.

12 For more information on the process of Ziegler's coronation, see Köhler (2007, pp. 91–92).

Ziegler was accused of fornication and also of seducing students and married men. The university started a process against the authors of the lampoons. In particular, two anonymous authors – students of the University of Leipzig – had parodied Gottsched's congratulatory ode,¹³ denigrating Ziegler as immoral on the one hand and propagating a conservative image of women that was generally hostile to women's poetic activity on the other.¹⁴

Finally, the honour of the German Society and its members was also attacked (Köhler 2007, pp. 149–150). The lampoons were the subject of an inquisition trial before the university court in Leipzig on 25th November 1733, but of course the perpetrators could neither be identified nor brought to justice. The University of Leipzig had to send a report to the sovereign (13th March 1734), whose reaction clearly shows the disruption of the event of Ziegler's coronation and of the following trial against the lampoons. The Elector of Saxony "informed the universities in his territory that in the future no such unconventional honours were to be awarded without his express permission" (Flood 2006, p. ccxiii).

4. Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann

Our second case study deals with Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann, who, as she herself emphasised several times in her writings, emulated Ziegler. Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann was born in 1711 in Erfurt as the daughter of the municipal notary Paul Nikolaus Zäunemann and his wife Hedwig Dorothea, née Güldemund.¹⁵

Zäunemann's educational background is unclear; she probably mostly taught herself through autodidactic studies. She studied Latin and French, as well as pursued knowledge in law and the natural sciences.

Her first publications came at the beginning of the 1730s in the form of occasional poems in the journal *Hamburgische Berichte von neuen gelehrten Sachen* ('Hamburg reports on newly learned things'). In addition, a complete volume of her poetry was published in 1738 under the title *Poetische Rosen in Knospen* (Zäunemann 1738b). Zäunemann died at the age of 29 in a drowning accident in the Gera. The accidental death was even reported in the newspapers and obituaries were published.¹⁶

Zäunemann remained unmarried throughout her life; she may have made a conscious decision not to marry, as she herself spoke negatively about marriage (Zäunemann 1738b, p. 629), or, as her lyrical self states in a poem, claimed she would rather enter a convent (Dziudza 2020, p. 183).

She also frequently articulated topics in her poetry that could be considered 'unfeminine.' For example, she wrote a didactic poem about a visit to the Ilmenau mine based on her own experience. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had a copy of this poem in his library (Dziudza 2020, p. 183). Zäunemann had entered the tunnels in miners' clothing twice. This act and her poem about the visit of the tunnels were perceived as a disruptive event. The intrusion of a young woman with a thirst for knowledge into a male-dominated area and space was not welcomed.¹⁷ Zäunemann had aroused displeasure, particularly among the clergy and in

13 Concerning the analysis of these parodies, see Köhler (2007).

14 One has to differentiate between two text variants (text A and text B) to learn more about the image of women in the lampoons; for this, see Köhler (2007, pp. 124–127).

15 For more details, see Dziudza (2020).

16 For an analysis of the reception of her accidental death, see Roßbach (2015, pp. 132–135).

17 See Roßbach (2015, pp. 119–135) for an interpretation of gender specific aspects on the poem of Zäunemann.

the literary world. As the *Sendschreiben an den Priester* ('letter to the priest') (Zäunemann 1738b, pp. 593–596) testifies, she defends herself with great humour and cheekiness.

In her poem on the Ilmenau mine, Zäunemann not only reports on the arduous work underground and calls for more recognition for the mining profession, but also argues in favour of a more practical style of dress for women:

Man wendet zwar darwider ein:
Kein Weib soll Mannes-Kleider tragen.
(Wenn es geleg'ne Zeit wird sein,
Will ich hierauf die Antwort sagen.)
Man wirft mir weiter vor: Dies sei nicht mein Beruf
Es sei von Gott der Weiber-Orden
Zum Haushalt nur erschaffen worden
[...]
Spieß, Degen, Blatt und Kiel schmückt auch die Weiber-Hand
Weswegen soll denn nicht ein Frauen-Bild auf Erden
Durch Leder, Licht und Fahrt ein kühner Bergmann werden?
(Zäunemann 2020, pp. 30–31)

People object to this:
No woman should wear men's clothes.
(When the time is right,
I want to respond to this).
They reproach me further: This is not my profession
The order of women was created by God
Was only created for the household
[...]
Spear, sword, blade and keel also adorn the female hand
Why should not a woman's image on earth
Become a bold miner through leather, light and drive?

Zäunemann is also said to have travelled by horse disguised as a man and to have generally resisted the contemporary role of women. She criticised the exclusion of women from education and science. The effect of modelling herself after her poetic persona was the portrayal of a strong, brave, and witty woman wearing men's clothing (Roßbach 2015, p. 119).

Like Ziegler, Zäunemann was accepted as a poet. Her sovereign, Duke Ernst August, bestowed honours on her (Dziudzia 2020, pp. 180–181), and shortly afterwards, the newly founded University of Göttingen, which was dedicated to the ideals of the Enlightenment, awarded her a diploma as poeta laureata.

A copy of the diploma¹⁸ can be found in the appendix of her volume of poetry *Poetische Rosen*. The prorektor and professor of theology in Göttingen, Jacob Wilhelm Feuerlein, granted her all rights – including the right to teach – and freedoms associated with this honourable title (Dziudzia 2023, p. 155). In her diploma it says:

[...] so hat hiesiger Academische Senat aus eigner Bewegnis einhellig beschlossen, dieser hochberühmten Poetin den Lorbeer-Cranz zuzusenden, und sie zu der wolverdienten Würde einer Kaiserl. gekrönten Poetin zu erheben: [...] und Ihr alle damit verknüpfte Vorrechte und Freyheiten, deren ein Kayserlich gekrönter Poet an irgends einem Ort zu erfreuen haben mag, ertheile, worüber gegenwärtige Urkund ausgefertigt [...].¹⁹

18 Which, unlike Ziegler's diploma, was issued exclusively in German; Ziegler's was still in Latin with a German translation.

19 The diploma of Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann is stuck in Zäunemann 1738 as an "Anhang" ('attachment'), between pages 32 and 33. The copy is only available in some editions of *Poetische Rosen* like the one in

[...] so the Academic Senate here has unanimously decided of its own accord to award this highly famous poetess the laurel wreath and to elevate her to the well-deserved dignity of an imperially crowned poetess: [...] and granting her all the privileges and freedoms associated therewith which an Imperial Crowned Poet may enjoy in any place, of which the present document is executed [...].

The diploma also explicitly refers to the right that women are entitled to this honour:

Die Akademischen Würden gehören nicht allein für gelehrte und wohlverdiente Männer, sondern es hat auch das Frauenzimmer, wenn Selbiges durch stattliche Proben gründlich erlangter Wissenschaften sich hervor gethan, dazu einen gerechten und billigen Anspruch.²⁰

Academic honours are not only for learned and well-deserving men, but also women, who have a just and equitable claim to them if they have distinguished themselves through impressive examples of thoroughly acquired knowledge.

Like Ziegler, Zäunemann responded to the awarding of the diploma with an ode of thanks.²¹ Therein she called for women to also be able to participate in the sciences:

Sonst meint das Männliche Geschlecht,
Die, welche Huth und Degen tragen,
Sie hätten nur allein das Recht
Nach Weißheit, Kiel und Ruhm zu fragen.
Sie halten meistentheils dafür,
Sophia habe ihre Zier
Und Schmuck von ihnen bloß zu hoffen.
Sie bilden sich wohl öfters ein:
Es stünde der belaubte Hayn,
Nur ihnen ganz alleine offen.
(Zäunemann 1738a, 2nd stanza)

Otherwise, the male sex thinks
Those who wear hat and sword
They alone would have the right
To ask for wisdom, quill, and fame
They mostly believe (the fact) that
Sophia (the wisdom) can only hope for decoration
and jewellery from them
They have often imagined:
The leafy grove was only open
For them alone.

She even encourages her female counterparts to take up the pen and win the laurel wreath:

Zeigt Geist und Gluth, damit man nicht
Zum Nachtheil aller Frauen spricht:
Es ist kein weises Weib vorhanden!
(Zäunemann 1738a, end of the 6th stanza)

Show spirit and embers, so that no one
Speaks to the disadvantage of all the women:
A wise woman does not exist.

the Staatsbibliothek Bamberg (Bip.L.g.o.220) we used here. It is digitalized under <https://www.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/view/bsb11433103?page=700,701> (last accessed: 16.12.2024).

20 Ibidem.

21 Zäunemann 1738a.

In the ode, she also mentions Ziegler, along with the famous Italian female professor of the University of Bologna, Laura Bassi, as her personal role models. Finally, she appeals to the gentlemen of the university to stand by their decision (perhaps in memory of the scandal surrounding Ziegler's coronation):

Verfechtet, was Jhr jetzt gethan!
 Vertheidget, was Jhr unternommen;
 Ich leg indes den Lorber an,
 Den ich von Eurer Hand bekommen.
 (Zäunemann 1738a, penultimate stanza)

Defend what you have done now!
 Defend what you undertook;
 In the meantime, I put on the laurel,
 Which I received from your hand.

Usually, for the coronation of poets, and as was already the case with Ziegler, coins were minted in her honour and put into circulation (Dziudzia 2020, p. 184). After Ziegler, Zäunemann was until then only the second female poet to be crowned by a university in Germany.

5. Synopsis

The idea of combining the recent topic and theory of disruption with the history of the German *poetae laureatae* is a result of discussions across scientific fields. We asked if the modern concept of the three types of disruption could be applicable to our case studies.

We presented two female poets: One, very young, lived unmarried as a single person, and died early. Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann became famous in her lifetime because of her unconventionality but was forgotten for some time and only rediscovered in the last few years.²²

The other female poet, Christiana Mariana von Ziegler, lived to be much older, survived two husbands, was married three times, and even had children. She was a person of society, keeping in contact with Johann Sebastian Bach and Johann Christoph Gottsched and many others. She founded a literary circle in Leipzig.

Both stood up for women's educational rights and were female voices in literature and the sciences.

Being crowned as *poetae laureatae*, the two female poets crossed the boundary between male and female in the domain of literature. The two universities used the women as a means by which to promote a modern reputation, while the two poets were able to promote their new titles: a win-win situation. However, both also faced problems, as the slander Ziegler experienced – resulting from the laureation – explicitly demonstrates. In the case of Zäunemann, we can call this a more implicit disruptive event or discourse.

So, can we call the laureation of a woman a disruptive event? And if yes, which form of disruption?

First, we can say that the laureations of women were disruptive because they are remembered today. There were many more men who received laureations than women – and

22 Especially the FONTE-Stiftung (fonte-stiftung.de, last accessed: 16-12-2024) contributed to the (re-) discovery of female authors and made former forgotten texts available in the three publication series: FONTE Atelier, Edition FONTE and Femmes de Lettres.

these crowned men are minimally discussed today (Flood 2006, pp. xlii–xlv). Indeed, we still talk about these women, but only about the most famous men.

Why are we able to talk about them? There is some information preserved in so-called *Frauenzimmerlexika* ('encyclopaedia of women') or *Frauenzimmerkatalogen* ('catalogues of women').²³ The aspect of being different from an assumed norm which is also a form of disruption makes it that these independent acting women were seen as irritating in society, as "Wunderthiere" ('miraculous animals').²⁴ Again, independent women were unconventional.

If we combine modern theory with these historical incidents, we can ask: Are these disruptive events predetermined points of disruption (*Sollbruchstörungen*) or adaptive disruptions (*adaptive Störungen*)?

Let's have a look again at the case of Christiana Mariana von Ziegler. After being slandered and put through the legal process, the Emperor took action. He advised the university to ask for permission if an extraordinary case like hers was to come up again. On the one hand, this is a typical return to the status quo. The old system becomes re-established and everything stays as it was before. This process can be interpreted as a 'predetermined point of disruption'. On the other hand, this explicit advice of the Emperor could be interpreted as an event of reenforcing, which means that he wanted to know about well-educated women and wanted to support them, which could be the beginning of an adaptive disruption. Of course, all of this is speculation.

Transforming very active and independent women into "Wunderthiere" makes it easier for the established system to accept them. The women overstepped the traditional system but did not destabilize it. Quite the opposite, they become a feature of the reputation of the nation or a region.

The laureation processes of the two women could point toward the direction of adaptive disruptions (*adaptive Störungen*). For instance, other women were crowned as poetae laureatae later on. The fact that Christiana Mariana von Ziegler did not remain the only female poet who received the laureation shows that this – what had been previously unthinkable – was now possible. Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann follows, and later, Anna Margarete Pfeffer (1679–1746)²⁵ (Flood 2006, pp. 1520–1521), Anna Louisa Karsch (1722–1791) (Flood 2006, pp. 965–968)²⁶ and Johanne Charlotte Unzer (1725–1782) (Flood 2006, pp. 2143–2145)²⁷, for example. This can be interpreted as a new tradition and as a change in the established system.

The fact that Christiana Mariana von Ziegler and Sidonia Hedwig Zäunemann are not forgotten today, and we can talk and write about them here and now, can also be

23 *Frauenzimmerkataloge* ('catalogues of women') are collections of examples of famous women. These collections are sometimes also called *Frauenzimmerlexika* ('encyclopaedia of women'), but the latter are different from the first named. The women in the catalogues are objects of demonstration and not subjects for readers to digest (Roßbach 2015, p. 63). Today the compendium of Woods/Fürstenwald (1984) offers a very helpful first approach to learn something about erudite women in the time of the German baroque.

24 The nomination goes back to Luise Adelgunde Gottsched, who (if we follow the presentation of her husband Johann Christoph Gottsched) tried to mock the situation that well-educated women were treated as a curiosity and as something extraordinary (Dziudzia/Klimek 2022, p. 5). Concerning Luise Adelgunde Gottsched, see also Dziudzia (2018).

25 For Pfeffer and her respect for Zäunemann, see Dziudzia (2023, pp. 158–168).

26 For more information about Anna Louisa Karsch and the idea of female writing traditions, see Dziudzia (2022a).

27 Concerning the laureation of Johanne Charlotte Unzer, see Koloch (2011, p. 102).

interpreted as a result of an adaptive disruption. As sensitive cases, they entered into cultural memory and literary history. This is because adaptive disruptions are disruptions that can productively be used by a society. With this disruption, knowledge is dispersed, and society can start evolving, growing and learning. In the cases we presented, society learned that women were not only able to write poetry, but could also help to develop a literary canon and a poetic German language whose evolution was still very much in progress at that time.

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