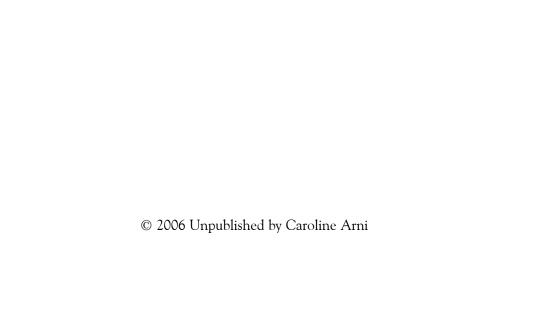# Rivalry and Friendship in the Heterosexual Couple.

Challenges to Discourses of Society in

Late 19th and Early 20th Century Europe

Caroline Arni

The Occasional Papers of the School of Social Science are versions of talks given at the School's weekly Thursday Seminar. At these seminars, Members present work-in-progress and then take questions. There is often lively conversation and debate, some of which will be included with the papers. We have chosen papers we thought would be of interest to a broad audience. Our aim is to capture some part of the cross-disciplinary conversations that are the mark of the School's programs. While Members are drawn from specific disciplines of the social sciences—anthropology, economics, sociology and political science—as well as history, philosophy, literature and law, the School encourages new approaches that arise from exposure to different forms of interpretation. The papers in this series differ widely in their topics, methods, and disciplines. Yet they concur in a broadly humanistic attempt to understand how, and under what conditions, the concepts that order experience in different cultures and societies are produced, and how they change.

Caroline Arni is Lecturer in the Sociology Department, University of Bern, Switzerland, where she is affiliated with the department's programs on cultural sociology, interpretive sociology and social theory. She was a Member of the School of Social Science in 2004-2005, and participated in the School's theme seminar on "Interdisciplinarity and Its Objects." Trained as a historian and a sociologist, her work is situated at the intersection of both disciplines. She received her PhD in History at the University of Bern in 2002 and was awarded the "Moritz Lazarus Prize of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Bern." Arni is the author of "Entzweiungen. Die Krise der Ehe um 1900" (Boehlau Verlag, 2004), awarded the "Gender Studies Prize of the University of Bern" (2004). In this book, she offers a study of legal and intellectual discourses on marriage, love, and divorce in early twentieth century Europe as well as a series of microhistorical case studies on the experience of marriage in the city of Bern based on extensive archival material. Another area of research gravitates around the relationship between feminist thought and social theory, both in a historical perspective and with regard to the current canon. At present she works on the history of reproductive medicine, exploring negotiations of procreation, paternity and genealogy between nature, biology and artifice in modernity.

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In the 1830's the most charming, playful, and imaginative of French utopian socialists had a dream—a daydream. Charles Fourier wrote: "We will not hesitate any longer to recognize that woman is meant to be man's counterbalance and not his servant. The masculine sex needs a rival and an emulating competitor. Where can we find such a competitor if not in the female sex?" (Fourier 1975: 223). This sentence does not just articulate a dream, but reveals the prescience of Fourier, for it expresses one of the core problems of gender relations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The problem of rivalry between women and men extends from intimate and concrete personal relationships to the political spheres of modern society. Not by accident was it Fourier who captured this range, since he was deeply obsessed with the connectedness between realms thought to be distinct. He was convinced, for instance, that the amount of unhappiness in one part of the world contributed to the saltiness of the ocean in other parts of the world–because of the shedding of tears. To cite a less fanciful example of Fourier's way of thinking: he believed that a more harmonious social and political order would emanate from human passions if only they were freed from social conventions.

If I am interested in the links between the personal and the political it is not to simply restate the familiar and nowadays somewhat old-fashioned slogan, "the personal is political" (and vice-versa). Rather I want to take up the conceptual challenge posed for history and the social sciences by the linking of what is sometimes distinguished as the micro and the macro, or the particular and the general, or the subjective and the objective, or experience and discourse. I omit the "versus" that often comes with these sets of analytical distinctions, because it constructs what Pierre Bourdieu, among others, identified as "false antagonisms" (2004 [1988]: 70). To put all this in more concrete terms: I am concerned here, on the one hand, with the question of how discourses on gender differences translate into everyday practices, especially the constitution of experience in the heterosexual couple. On the other hand, I am concerned with the historically specific dynamic in the fabric of the couple which provokes such discourses on gender differences and, in turn, their relation to social and political order.

This conceptual and methodological challenge is one of two ways in which Fourier inspires this paper, as I will move from the case study of a particular personal relationship to the analysis of discourses on society and modernity, especially discourses of social theory. Fourier also inspires this paper by his use of a *leitmotiv* of rivalry. By calling for women's rivalry with men, Fourier, of course, echoed the claims for women's emancipation and civic equality that made quite a stir among his contemporaries. But by framing these claims in terms of *rivalry*, Fourier was expanding the scope of imagined relationships between women and men.

If we listen carefully, I would like to argue, the relationship designated by "rivalry" in Fourier's daydream actually refers to friendship.

On what grounds do I claim this perhaps counterintuitive link between rivalry and friendship? We tend to understand rivalry and friendship as mutually exclusive; rivalry is hostile and conflictual, friendship is tender and harmonious. However accurate this distinction, rivalry and friendship do share an underlying presupposition that is explicitly exposed in canonical discourses on friendship. In a close reading of some of these canonical texts from antiquity to modernity, Jacques Derrida discerned one common feature: "The figure of the friend regularly comes on stage with the feature of the brother, presupposing the proximity of congeneric doubles, two of the same kind" (Derrida 1997: viii). For now, let me put the emphasis not on the masculinity of the "brother" but on the "proximity of congeneric doubles." If friendship is conceptualized as a relationship between "congeneric doubles" induced by "proximity," it articulates a lateral relation.

Laterality is what rivalry shares with friendship. I am not describing social practices here, but historically specific conceptualizations of relationships. So let me explain this by an etymological argument, drawing on various dictionaries of French, English and German. The word "rival" comes from the Latin "rivalis" that derivates on its side from "rivulus," a small stream. "Rivalis" are those who share the right to use the water of the same stream (the word became *riverains* in French, translates into abutters in English, and *Anlieger* in German). In a metaphoric usage, "rivalis" acquired in Latin the meaning of "rivals in love matters," which constitutes one of the main meanings the word rivalry still has in common usage. By this metaphoric transfer, the right to use the same object translates into the desire for, or the aspiration to, the same object. This is where rivalry becomes synonymous with competition, the second important meaning of the word identified in etymological studies. Hence, rivalry denotes the relation induced by the claim one person makes to something another person aspires to as well, based on the assumption, embedded in the origin of the word, that one is entitled to do so.

The assumption that one is entitled to rival or to compete is crucial. While conflict is not necessarily part of rivalry in the original sense of the word "rivalis,"[1] it settles in the transferred and generalized usage of the word as synonymous with competition and is nowadays commonly associated with questions of power. This association should not obstruct our view of the kind of relation rivalry is based upon, however, or, to put it in other words, what actually makes this kind of competitive conflict possible: namely a proximity induced by an assumed entitlement of access to the same object, to share the same good or to aim at the same goal.[2] Just like friendship, rivalry implies a lateral and not a vertical relation. If one of the rivals prevails, rivalry ends and dominance begins.

Another slight but significant hint of the link between friendship and rivalry is the utopian quality of Fourier's claim which projects the coming into being of rivalry onto the future and therefore implies a criticism of the present social order. This utopian quality of rivalry echoes the dreamlike quality inherent to friendship in canonical discourses. Is friendship not, in the social imaginary, to use Derrida's words again, "something yet to happen, to be desired, to be promised?" (1988: 635). This dreamlike quality of friendship yet to come

reverberates and doubles in Fourier's words about rivalry between women and men because the figure of the friend as brother has to be taken literally: the canonical structure of friendship is, again in Derrida's words, an "androcentric" one (1997: 13), "excluding the feminine or heterosexuality" (1993: 328). Within this structure, friendship between a woman and a man represents an impossibility as is evident in canonical texts of friendship. As for instance, in Michel de Montaigne's essay "Of Friendship," written in the sixteenth century: "...to say truth, the ordinary talent of women is not such as is sufficient to maintain that converse and fellowship which is the nurse of this sacred tie [friendship]; nor do they appear to be endued with firmness of mind to endure the strain of so hard and durable a knot. And certainly, but for that, there could be such a free and voluntary familiarity formed where not only the souls might have this complete enjoyment, but the bodies also might share in the alliance, and the whole man be engaged in it, the friendship would certainly be more full and perfect. But this [female] sex in no instance has ever yet been able to reach it, and by the common agreement of the ancient schools is excluded from it" (Montaigne 1949: 63).

While the impossibility of heterosexual friendship is a constant throughout the centuries, as is the yearning for such friendships, the rationales change. When Nietzsche wrote, in 1891, that "woman is not yet capable of friendship," it was not anymore a question of the *firmness of mind*, but one of hierarchy: women were incapable of friendship, Nietzsche argued, because "far too long has there been a slave and a tyrant concealed in woman. On that account woman is not yet capable of friendship: she knows only love" (Nietzsche 1918 [1891]: 82). Sure enough, Nietzsche does not indulge his fellow men: "But tell me, you men, who of you are capable of friendship?" However, while for Nietzsche friendship among men is a faint but real possibility, heterosexual friendship is, if not altogether impossible, at best a mere "potential potentiality." Nietzsche does not craft an ontological argument here, but a historical and sociological one. Power relations obstruct heterosexual friendship as long as women are either enslaved or tyrannical. That is to say that equality is the precondition for friendship.

The conjunction of friendship, equality and relations between the sexes was viewed differently by women. When claims for universal equality arose in the eighteenth century, relations between the sexes were increasingly problematized in terms of equality/inequality, despite (or perhaps because of) the exclusion of women on the grounds of the difference of their sex (Scott 1996, Honegger 1991). The universal promise of equality explains why aspiring to heterosexual friendships became, for enlightened *salonnières* in the eighteenth century, a way of demanding to be acknowledged as equals by their male companions (Schnegg 2001).

Such was the claim of the *salonnière* and *femme de lettres* Germaine de Staël who, in 1796, stated that equality was the aim of those women and men who engaged as friends. Of course, she acknowledged the pitfalls of female friendship (jealousy especially) as well as those of heterosexual friendship (where love interferes in manifold and complex ways), but de Staël firmly believed in the potentiality of such friendships. Equality, she argued, constitutes both friendship and its pivotal problem which holds true for both women and men. Friendship in its accomplished form, she maintained, consists in the complete merging of two lives through

a communication which can only be attained by those able to leave their *amour propre* behind. Friendship therefore demands a complete self-abnegation which, however, conflicts with equality—"the fatal need for perfect reciprocity" (de Staël 1979 [1796]: 187-194).

It can be said, to sum up a most complex lineage of thinking in a rough conclusion, that conceptualizations of friendship in modernity are predominantly concerned with the problematic conjunction of friendship and equality. This is where rivalry comes in. Rivalry presupposes not just laterality but also what I would like to capture with the notion of "equilaterality."[3] Aiming at the same right, the same goal or the same good puts the rivals in an equal relation insofar as it is based upon their assumed entitlement to aspire to this right, goal or good. An albeit weak but significant evidence for this might be the meaning of the word "rivalry" that becomes increasingly significant in the nineteenth century: namely that the phrase "without rival" comes to denote the one who has "no equal" (Trésor 1990). Friendship and rivalry then presuppose not just a lateral, but an equilateral relation. The fact that rivalry looms large as the notorious disturbing factor in many texts on friendship only confirms this observation.

Implying a relation of two congeneric doubles or equals, too, rivalry would then be, according to the canonical concepts, between woman and man as impossible as friendship. But, perhaps, as desired as friendship, too. Such is the exquisite provocation of Fourier's daydream: He takes the possibility of heterosexual friendship for granted and thereby grants the equality of the sexes by entertaining the possibility of the dark side of friendship: rivalry. In other words, if women are acknowledged as equals they can be friends but they can become rivals, too. And if men engage with women in friendship and rivalry the latter are necessarily acknowledged as equals.

The Grimm Case or: The Yearning for Friendship in Marriage

The dream that women and men might join in the same worldly endeavors was shared by a Swiss couple in the spring of 1908. In that year, Robert Grimm, a son of proletarian parents, leader of the Swiss labor movement and future social-democratic statesman, married Rosa Reichesberg-Schlain, a Jewish Russian intellectual and Marxist. Eight years later, in 1916, they filed for divorce, both of them writing elaborate letters to their lawyers in justification of their desire to separate.[4]

In his letter to his lawyer, Robert Grimm reported that he first met Rosa Grimm, when she was divorcing her former husband, Jovel Reichesberg: "Seeing her in despair I directed the woman to work as a healing factor. My high estimation of the intelligence and intellectual skills of Mrs. Reichesberg led me to propose that she move to Basel where she could work as an activist in the labor movement. Since, at the time, I had a position in the movement there, I could easily help her to do so. During the repeated conversations we had, I developed a deep sympathy for the unhappy woman. I was happy to see her respond to these feelings. I did so not just as a human being but also as the young partisan I was. I had been deprived of anything beyond an elementary education. Yet, my position in the labor movement begged for more than the idealism that animated me and the education I brought

with me."[5]

Robert Grimm described an encounter involving two persons who become reciprocally reliant on each other: Rosa, lost in despair, relies on the practical Robert, while he, as a worker who was hungry for education, relied on her knowledge and intellect. This well balanced equilateral union corresponded to the envisioned design of the relationship, as Robert Grimm was looking not for a devoted wife, but for an intellectual and political companion, a comrade-in-arms: "What more could I have wished for [...] than a companion whom I expected not just to respond to feelings of human sympathy, but to share with me a life of intellectual community and practical work, a work in which we could both be completely absorbed, in which we could find inner satisfaction and which assured us, at the same time, the firm hope of serving well the movement to which we both adhered, by putting our heart and soul in it."

Such a personal alliance realized the political pact of intellectuals and workers, as well as its idealization in Marxist theory. This kind of relationship also embodied a socialist and feminist alternative to "bourgeois marriage," discarding male domination as well as a gendered division of labor. The relationship envisioned by Robert Grimm was not the one of a husband-master and his submissive wife, dedicated exclusively to children, household, and marital love—the model foreseen by the codification of marriage that was about to be inscribed in Swiss marital law at the time.[6]

Unfortunately, Grimm's meticulously crafted narrative of balanced reciprocity tilts before it is told. It does so in the initial passage of the narrative: "Analyzing my then relationship with Frau Dr. Reichesberg, I have come to realize that I was predominantly animated by a feeling of pity [*Mitleid*] for the woman who was in despair, a human sentiment for an unhappy person whose desperate condition gave reason to fear the worst." In this passage there occurs a crucial twist: By identifying his original feeling for Rosa as *pity*, Grimm trivializes the emotional origin of a marriage that was otherwise conceived in terms of love. Moreover, he defines his wife as being more dependent on him (dependent in an existential sense since she is presented as being suicidal). Something else happens in this passage when Robert refers to Rosa almost exclusively as *woman* or *person* and identifies his sentiment for her as a generic *human sentiment*; it was a compassion he would have felt for any human being in a situation akin to Rosa's. His feeling had nothing to do with her as an individual, with the unique and distinctive character she might have possessed and which might have ignited in him more than compassion—love, for instance. His account of the origin of the marriage turns out to be not just banal (pity) and unilateral (she needs him) but also indifferent about her distinct character.

In her account of the marriage, written as well in the form of a letter to her divorce lawyer, Rosa comments on her husband's report. She reacts directly to this moment in his narration: "So he starts brooding on his complaint [...], and arrives at the conclusion that his original feeling for me was probably just pity. One can allege whatever pleases oneself, yet the facts speak another language. His affection was frenzied passion. No caress was tender enough, no word was sufficient to express his feelings."[7] In Rosa's account, it was not compassion but passion that drove Robert into the relationship. And she is very precise about

the nature of his passion. It is an excess of feeling which goes beyond the power of physical and linguistic expression.

Such passion is distinct from compassion, but neither is it really about the personality of the other. While compassion denotes the non-personalized feeling for a generic human, passion refers to a solipsistic sentiment with one direction and one aim: self-satisfaction. As an excessive feeling, passion is as deficient as compassion because it is unable to found a *relationship* of two individuals that would build upon a reciprocal recognition of the other. Her husband, Rosa writes, "knows well passion, yet he does not know love [...]. Take this as evidence: he does not have a single intimate friend." Hence it is love, distinguished from compassion and passion, that Robert lacks, in Rosa's account. In her view, only love could have accomplished the marriage she had envisioned: a friendship which she describes as the "intimate sharing of thoughts, impressions, written lines." She does not distinguish this friendship between a woman and a man from friendship among individuals of the same gender. On the contrary, in her account, Robert's deficiency in making friends of any sex proves his incapacity to love her.

Deeply contradictory as they are, the narratives of Rosa and Robert Grimm bear testimony not only to an ongoing marital controversy. The narrative choices point to more: While Robert Grimm writes the history of his marriage from the perspective of his biography, Rosa Grimm focuses almost exclusively on an analysis of feelings. The divergence of plots repeats the disruption of this marriage on the narrative plane, exposing a tension that can be understood as paradigmatic for the history of the heterosexual couple in modernity.

Rosa Grimm expected her marriage to take shape as an "intimate friendship" that, in analogy to friendship among male individuals, would transcend the gendered division of labor and build upon the distinctive personality of the other. Asked by the judge why she married Robert, Rosa answered: "He was neither especially attractive nor famous nor known... I married him for love, because of his personality. What other reason could I have had?" This view of marriage as a loving friendship echoes what the social philosopher Georg Simmel called (in the very same year as the Grimm's wedding), "... the sociological *idea* of modern marriage," namely "the commonness of *all* life-contents, insofar as they determine the value and fate of the personality, immediately or through their effects" (Simmel 1964 [1908]: 328).[8] Like Rosa Grimm, Georg Simmel, in his discussion of *modern marriage*, draws an analogy between friendship among men and the heterosexual relationship: both, he argues, "are built, at least in their idea, upon the person in its totality" (Simmel 1964 [1908]: 325).

However, Simmel did not consider the two individuals that conjoin in *modern marriage* as congeneric. Whereas, on the grounds of his equally painful and creative involvement in the social division of labor, man is a differentiated being capable of individuation, woman is defined as primordially and immutably female. While he is an "individual," she is a "type" (Simmel 1984 [1911]). Seen from this angle, the heterosexual relationship is doomed to remain an incomplete friendship, irritated and disturbed by sexual difference. And here reverberates the tension in the canonical tradition of friendship that I have been describing.

Rosa Grimm, on her side, equates, without restriction of any kind, friendship among men with a heterosexual loving relationship. She articulates this in a most condensed way by

equating her husband's inability to love her with his inability to cultivate friendships of any kind. In doing so, she radicalizes Simmel's idea of *modern marriage*. Moreover, she turns the analogy of friendship and marriage against the assumptions that underlie Simmel's argument: If the intimate relationship between a man and a woman acquires its most accomplished form in a kind of love that generates friendship, then it becomes a means of overcoming the stereotyping of individual women according to an assumed femininity. Intimacy then becomes a medium where female individuality can be recognized—against a predominant social and symbolic order that tends to conflate individual women with the female type.

However, such a relationship proved to be intolerable for Robert Grimm and this can be seen clearly in the way his account of the marriage fits in the larger story of his life—that of a worker who ascends to leadership of the national labor movement. Robert's account is an interpretive act that relates the past to the narrating self and its present. From this perspective, the story of Robert's marriage and his political rise serves as an emotional and intellectual 'liberation' from the relationship.

The liberation Robert achieves by describing his original feeling as *pity*, denies the emotional origin of the marriage. To this liberation from emotional entanglement he adds a liberation from intellectual dependency. Robert writes: "During the years of our marriage, I became more autonomous in my thinking and judgment. No longer was I the young, naïve worker who was impressed by the mere fact of somebody having a higher education. Things depend also on how this person practices usury with what she possesses. With the growth of the independence of my judgment, conflicts between the two of us proliferated." As years went by, Robert could do without Rosa's knowledge and intellectual skills. He became an equal to his wife in the sphere of education. Her original intellectual prominence lost value from his subjective perspective once there was nothing more he could learn from her. Interestingly, this intellectual emancipation was not presented as an acquisition of intellectual equity, the achievement of a relationship of peers. Instead, his henceforth well trained intelligence makes him preeminent and he can now judge the objective value of his wife's intellectual capital. Since he is no longer easily impressed, he discovers that she "practices usury," trying to realize a disproportionate, exploitative, indecently high profit on her capital. Considering the fact that Rosa was Jewish, one might guess that Robert also evoked an anti-Semitic stereotype easily at hand at the time. Even if we ignore this possibility, the display of his intellectual preeminence leads to a devaluation of Rosa's moral character, given the meaning "exploitation" has in the discourse of a socialist.

This remarkable narrative leap from intellectual dependence to intellectual and moral preeminence can be interpreted as an attempt to foreclose the rivalry which necessarily appeared when Robert caught up with Rosa—especially since both were publicly engaged in political activism. At the very beginning of the narrative Robert's educational inferiority suspended the rivalry which, in any case was balanced by Rosa's emotional dependency and his own emotional detachment. Now rivalry was foreclosed by the assertion of his intellectual and moral preeminence. And the foreclosure of rivalry precludes what would necessarily correspond with the design of marriage as friendship: the equality of the two mates. Indeed, equality is never allowed to emerge from and to be realized in Robert Grimm's narrative.

The question remains: What makes this act of emotional and intellectual 'liberation' necessary or even inevitable? What creates the urgency to avoid equality? To answer this question, I have to go from the letters of Rosa and Robert Grimm to what Pierre Bourdieu calls the "social surface"—the diachronic and synchronic state of the field (*champs social*) in which the actor is situated (Bourdieu: 1986: 71, Lahire 1999: 46). Two fields have to be considered here: the "private" field of anti-bourgeois companionate marriage and the "public" field of socialist and Swiss politics.

The years between 1908 and 1916 were not only the years of the Grimm marriage. They coincided with a period of intense political conflict in Switzerland during which the Swiss socialist movement radicalized its positions and its activity under the leadership of Robert Grimm (Degen 1995, McCarthy 1985, Gruner and Dommer 1988, Tanner 1995, Wigger 1997). As various historians have shown, the aggressive and militant tone of political conflict in this period stressed the masculinity of politics and political leadership (Blattmann 1998). Robert Grimm's role as a socialist leader and future member of the Swiss political establishment at once defined and depended upon his masculinity.

Yet, it was this very manliness, or, more precisely, this masculinism that was endangered in his private life, threatened by the design of his marriage. The anti-bourgeois concept of a relation of two equals engaged in the same political work undermines the idea that, since the 18th century, counts as the foundation of masculinity: men's individual autonomy and their substantial difference from women (Scott 1996). Robert Grimm's account of his marriage can be interpreted as a twofold reaction to his threatened masculinity. What I have called emotional liberation via *pity* attempts to resolve the tension between emotional dependency in an intimate relationship, on the one hand, and male identity identified through autonomy, on the other hand. What I have called intellectual liberation via the moral devaluation of Rosa Grimm's intellectual capital seeks to resolve the tension between heterosexual rivalry, on the one hand, and male identity achieved through a fundamental difference from women, on the other hand.

While love conceived as friendship becomes in Rosa Grimm's hands a means of enforcing the claim for female individuation and equality in the couple, this very implication is untenable for Robert Grimm, reliant as he is on socially agreed upon norms of masculinity. By narrating the story of his marriage as he does, he liberates himself from a relationship that threatened because it did not tolerate hegemonic masculinity. He is and has always been, so his story goes, the man who is a militant socialist and who can become a respectable statesman.

Remarkably enough, in a *festschrift* that appeared after his death, commemorating his political *oeuvre* and his personality, Robert Grimm was celebrated literally as "a real man [*Mann*]." This is most accurately articulated in what a political opponent wrote about him, evoking at the same time admiration for the deceased's performance as a man and repulsion for his socialist cause: "He was a man and this combative nature of his stands above everything that was questionable about him" (Duerrenmatt 1958: 136). In recalling Robert Grimm in such terms, the author fully agreed with a socialist comrade-in-arms of the deceased who remembered him in the same *festschrift* by simply quoting from Shakespeare's Hamlet: "He

was a man, take him for all in all: I shall not look upon his like again" (Heeb 1958: 120).

The case of the Grimm's marriage is a very particular, even exceptional one, completely unrepresentative if we apply a quantitative notion of representativeness. My methodological approach here, however, eschews any idea of typicality. Instead, my approach is articulated by French sociologist Bernard Lahire: "If the singularity of a case cannot be understood without knowing the social and cultural processes that bring about the case, then there is nothing more general than the particular case" (Lahire 1999: 48). In this sense, the microscopic investigation of the Grimm marriage exposes more than just the story of this particular couple. There is a tight knot at the very core of their relationship that articulates in an almost paradigmatic way the ambivalent dynamic which constitutes the 'modern' couple. This couple is inhabited by a yearning for friendship which is, in turn, haunted by a fear of rivalry. By implication this means that equality, which is presupposed in both friendship and rivalry, is foreclosed even as it is aspired to, desired even as it is repressed.[9]

How are we to understand this foreclosure of equality? As a normative device being imposed upon everyday practices? Or as a reaction against a new dynamic of yearned for equality in the fabric of the couple?[10] Perhaps the idea of "separate spheres" for women and men that emerged so forcefully in the nineteenth century could, in this vein, be understood as a _response_ to the heterosexual rivalry that had become imaginable when claims to equality between the sexes were raised in the wake of the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century. This is exactly what Suzanne Necker, Germaine de Staël's mother, meant when she justified the gendered division of labor and the asymmetrical distribution of power as the main organizing principle of marriage by the very fact that "it prevents two souls from ever becoming rivals" (Necker 1794: 9). While the idea of friendship constitutes a promising way of modeling heterosexual relations to those who aspire to an egalitarian mode of gender relations, the specter of rivalry haunts those who do not share that aspiration—and those who are not prepared to take into account the full implication of such an aspiration.

A Discourse on Love – and Challenges to Canonical Social Theory

The attempt to understand where Rosa Grimm's concept of love as friendship came from, and what was historically specific about it, led me to further investigate discourses on love: those stemming from the Romantic movement and socialist criticisms of marriage, but also, as a necessary counterpart, those stemming from canonical philosophical and juridical concepts of love which mostly are discourses on women's innate tendency to submission and self-abandonment. For my purpose here, I will focus on only one particular strand of these discourses, one that allows me to move from marriage to social theory, from the case study of Rosa and Robert Grimm to the history of the social and human sciences.

I will focus on an argument about love that was made at the beginning of the twentieth century in the writings of the German literary critic Helene Stoecker and the Swedish writer Ellen Key. They were members of an intellectual movement that grew out of sexual and social reform movements labeled the "New Ethic," a "fashionable topic of the day" that, according to one historian, "influenced debates on sexual morality throughout the Western

world" (Taylor Allen 1999: 1104).[11]

At the core of the New Ethic lies the very same conceptualization of love that was articulated in Rosa Grimm's claim for friendship as a model for the heterosexual couple. Love, as it is conceived in terms of the New Ethic, has its *raison d'être* in the personality of the beloved. Such "modern love" as it was called is not only motivated by the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the beloved, but it is in itself a means of promoting the individuation of both the lover and the beloved.

This argument coincided with the contemporary Nietzschean cult of personality, an important source of inspiration for the New Ethic (Schluepmann 1984). It also embraced feminist claims in that it overcame what seemed to be dangerous in love matters from a woman's vantage point: namely the interest in the sexual desirability of the beloved. If the beloved is a woman this interest reinforces the symbolic order according to which women are bound to the female type (wife, mother). The alternative for the New Ethicists was a person-alized love, in which woman and man come together not as 'husband' and 'wife' but rather as "equal personalities" (Stoecker 1912). Such love promotes both the recognition of female indi-viduality and equality between the sexes. Moreover, it provides intimate relationships with ethical rules that could ultimately bypass the institution of marriage, seen as already corrupt-ed by financial interest and patriarchy.

Love, the New Ethic authors were eager to spell out, should be triggered by erotic attraction, but it should not be confounded with the then fashionable claims for "free love" or "free eroticism" in the sense of bohemian libertinage. It was not a hedonistic and selfish pleasure "antagonistic to duty" (Key 1905: 45). It was, on the contrary, about the perfection of humankind and the cohesion of society. By promoting the disposition of the beloved person to become a distinctive personality, *modern love* cultivated the very humanness of any beloved. And by emphasizing a reciprocal alliance of non-exchangeable others, *modern love* intensified individual loving and, by extension, social bonds. In the words of Ellen Key: Love is "not only the drive through which humankind gets new members but also the drive through which humankind will be more and more bound together and cultured" (Key 1905: 37). Seen in this manner, love acts to mediate and promote the evolution of individual personality, social solidarity and civilization.

This conceptualization of love had its own tricky implications: it could—and indeed did—feed into eugenic arguments through its obsession with the idea of the "perfection" of humankind. And it could also feed into the "psychologization" of love conceived as only a means to the end of the development of personality.[12] But this was not the aim of the New Ethic's discourse on love. The authors were eager not only to understand the workings of love but also to understand its relation to social cohesion. In this, they fed into a broader discourse on modern society and confronted the core problem of the then-new discipline of sociology (Wagner/Wittrock/Whitley 1991).

I make this link in the vein of a Foucauldian history of the disciplines that under-stands scientific disciplines in the content of wider social discourses (Foucault 1971). In addition, I argue that the disciplines must be understood as addressing problems, not providing definitive answers. This approach takes up a definition by Niklas Luhmann who

states that a theory can be considered as a classical one when it poses a problem that continues as an open but essential question, while the form in which the problem is expressed varies with the historical context (Luhmann 1996: 19f). I am concerned here with the formative period of the discipline of sociology. The key problem was how to conceive of social cohesion in modern society. And more precisely: How to conceive of social cohesion in a way that conciliated a "regulated social order with individual freedom and personal autonomy" (Müller/Schmid 1996: 481).

Seen from this perspective, the New Ethic writers represent an overlooked strand in the history of the discipline of sociology as it took shape from the mid-nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century.[13] Conceptualizing love in a way that conciliated personal individuation and social cohesion, these authors addressed the central problem of emerging sociology. Moreover, they approached it in a way that was analogous to 'the' classical sociological theorem that has its most explicit form in Emile Durkheim's concept of "organic solidarity" (Durkheim 1996 [1893]). According to this theorem, social cohesion in modern societies is brought about by the mutual dependence of differentiated subjects that results from the increasing division of labor. In the New Ethic's conceptualization of love, loving bonds are brought about by a reciprocal engagement of individuals that intensifies as individuation increases. To put it more simply: Both the New Ethic writers and Durkheim conceived of cohesion in modern societies in terms of unity through differentiation.

The New Ethic writers, however, differed crucially and significantly from Emile Durkheim and most of his fellow sociologists. Durkheim talked of individualization in relation only to men. He defined female life as non-specialized and non-individualized, confined to the family and household and serving as a check on the excesses of modernization (Marshall/Witz 2004, Lehmann 1994, Roth 1992). Love had its place in this construction too, especially when rationalization as a further marker of modernity came into play, since love was considered to be untouched by rationalization (Bertilsson 1986). Max Weber, one of these sociologists, understood erotic love as a means of innerworldly salvation, constituting a sphere of experience beyond the ordinary and the rationalized (Weber 1988 [1920], Lichtblau 1996: 315ff).

In this vein the cluster of "femininity," "love" and "female love" provided refuge for men who were alienated by excesses of differentiation and rationalization. This was the "social cement," the bulwark against modernity's doom and its price was the restriction of female individuation. As those familiar with the sociological canon know, this answer to the problem of social cohesion has made it—in many variations and not without complicated inner contradictions and ambivalences—into the canon of classical social theory. This line of thinking was renewed in Pierre Bourdieu's late writings on love which took up the very same thesis of female love as the refuge from, and the weapon against, neo-liberal social anomie (Bourdieu 1998: 116-119). This is sociology's narrative of modernity's doom and redemptive female love; female love is, in effect, sociology's utopia.

This utopian vision followed from the conceptual matrix used by the emerging social sciences, namely the definition of the individuated/differentiated modern subject as masculine (Marshall/Witz 2004). Female individuation could be sacrificed for the sake of social

cohesion because it did not appear to be a sacrifice, since women's innate capacity to individuate and differentiate had been called into doubt. The argument for individuation as an exclusively male capacity built upon and nourished by anatomical and physiological rationales, was cited in almost every 'classical' social theory throughout the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

The discourse on love, as articulated by the New Ethics offered a fundamental challenge to this core concept of the new discipline of sociology. It was not alone in doing so. The masculinity of the modern subject had been contested from its first theorization in the nineteenth century. I could cite authors such as Caroline Angebert who in early nineteenth century France contested Victor Cousin's masculine conceptualization of the coherent self as source of will and agency (Goldstein 1994). Or Jenny d'Héricourt, a French social philosopher who in mid-nineteenth century France criticized Auguste Comte, the so-called "founding father" of sociology, for his denial of women's capability to individuate which implied denying her agency in modern society (d'Héricourt 1860, Arni/Honegger 1998). Or Rosa Mayreder, who in *fin de siècle* Vienna wrote essays objecting to the idea of women being conflated with a female type (Mayreder 1910). Some of these authors not only argued against the masculine concept of the modern subject, they also challenged the biologistic assumptions that underlay this concept, not by stating a radical social constructivism, but by interpreting 'biological facts' in another, non-deterministic way, or by challenging the nature/culture dichotomy entirely.

The fact that these contestations remained marginal can, in the case of female authors, be explained by their exclusion from academic institutions. However, they often participated in what Helen Longino calls "knowledge communities," intellectual circles and networks (Longino 1990). They sometimes, albeit rarely, were even welcomed as correspondents by those whom they criticized. I would like to explain the marginality of these contestations from a different angle, arguing that they remained marginal because they refused the premise that the modern subject was masculine, contesting the very object of these disciplines. By doing so, they wrote themselves into the constitutive discourse of the emerging disciplines, since the constant defining and redefining of the object of study is one of the crucial factors in the coming into being and transformation of any discipline (Canguilhem 1979: 30f). But by contesting what would become the solidified conceptual core of sociology, however, they also were written out of what came to be the official history of the discipline. Perhaps one could go further, assuming that these contestations, not being unnoticed at the time, were completely marginalized only by the processes of tradition building and the invention of disciplinary identity that comes about with the transformation of discourses into disciplines.

Parting from these insights, we could approach the endlessly repeated articulation of female non-individuality and male individuality, of female non-agency and male agency not just as a dominant discourse that triumphed over its critics. On the contrary, it can also be read as a _reaction_ to internal challenges that have become invisible because they were, in the process of canonization, lost or delegitimized, mostly by being categorized as feminist criticism and not serious social theory. To establish this argument requires histories of the human and social scientific disciplines that take into account both the scope of pre-disciplinary

discourses and the margins of the disciplines (Eriksson 1993). Not just as what has been 'before' or 'besides' and so has not made it into the conceptual core of the established disciplines, but as sites of contestation that evoked reactions which then contributed to the constitution and solidification of this conceptual core.

Such a study might offer a slight yet not insignificant twist to the history of emerging social and human science disciplines in the nineteenth century. A twist actually, that in a constitutive and maybe historically accurate way links this history of the disciplines with the history of feminist critique in the nineteenth century—a critique that cannot, as is often done, be reduced to claims for civic equality.

The story of these debates and contestations perhaps could not be written without taking into account the yearning for friendship that haunts the Grimm's marriage. The attempts of female intellectuals to engage in public and theoretical speech, I would like to argue, should also be understood as an attempt to engage with their contemporaries in a conversation among friends—and, needless to say, rivals.

The mid-nineteenth century social philosopher Jenny P. d'Héricourt had imagined such a conversation with her famous contemporary, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. This potential friendship appeared to her as 'natural' and obvious, since Proudhon was, like her, a fierce Republican, a strict rationalist and a fellow Franche-Comtois—in some sense: a brother. But, when, in 1856, she published an open letter to Proudhon in a well-known Parisian intellectual journal, criticizing his version of what she called "the social annihilation of women," Proudhon responded, but <u>not</u> by taking up the invitation to an exchange of ideas. Instead he informed her that he might only enter into an intellectual debate with her if she let herself be represented by a male guardian who would sign her articles and take responsibility for everything she said. It would be inconsistent and indeed paradoxical, Proudhon wrote, to argue against the intellectual skills of women by entering an intellectual debate with one of them. D'Héricourt could not possibly have imagined, he concluded, that he would fall into this trap of hers, a trap which would have forced him to grant equality to his debating partner.

Yet, one might say, he already sat in the trap by simply recognizing the subtlety and cleverness of d'Héricourt's invitation. Perhaps he was tempted by the fact that her wit measured up to his own. Or, perhaps he was driven by a yearning for friendship and provoked by the spectre of rivalry. But this amounts to speculation and should be put in a footnote, the appropriate place for suggestions of an unruly imagination. However, and not in a footnote, I would like to conclude by suggesting that we must take account of the undercurrents, contradictions, and ambivalences, that are inherent in the fabric both of the most particular personal love stories and the most generic discourses on society. Attention to those undercurrents and ambivalences might not only widen our reconstructions of the past by expanding the scope of the possible, it might also explain something about the workings of historical change.

ENDNOTES

1 Though, as it is observed succinctly in one dictionary, being *riverains* "naturally" suggests "rivalry" in the derived sense of the word, "comme les riverains ont souvent disputé" (Littré 1877: 1737).

2 This also relates to Georg Simmel's observation on the distinctive feature of competition as an indirect form of conflict where the purpose is not to damage the adversary but the competitive effort concerns winning the same prize (Simmel 1955 [1908]: 57).

3 I am borrowing this term from Juliet Mitchell's study on siblings (Mitchell 2003).

4 What will be presented in the following section is an aspect of one out of nearly 500 divorce cases which were filed at the tribunal of the city of Berne between 1912 and 1916. Those cases constituted the main source material for my book on marriage and divorce. For the case study on the Grimm's marriage see chapter 5 in Arni 2004a.

5 Letter of Robert Grimm to Roland Brüstlein, cited in Robert Grimm's plaint, October 11, 1916, Staatsarchiv Bern, Bez. Bern B 3457, 167/16. All following quotes by Robert Grimm are taken from this document.

6 The need for and the form of a national codification of marriage and divorce was highly contested in Switzerland in the nineteenth century (opposing Catholics and Protestants as well as federalists and centralists). However, first moves were made in the middle of the nineteenth century. Eventually marriage and divorce were codified on a national level by the first national civil code (implemented in 1912). This codification installed a liberal-bourgeois model of marriage, meant to provide a bulwark against the perceived threat of social anomie and of a crisis in gender relations.

7 Letter of Rosa Grimm to Boris Lifschitz, cited in Rosa Grimm's statement of defense, November 15, 1916, Staatsarchiv Bern, Bez. Bern B 3457, 167/16. All following quotes by Rosa Grimm are taken from this document.

8 In this vein, Simmel distinguishes *modern marriage* from its predecessors by stating that marriage in "earlier cultures" was "not an erotic but, in principle, only a social and economic institution," the "intimate, reciprocal self-revelation" being "probably" neither desired nor possible. This idea of marriage in 'pre-modern' societies being nothing else than a functional arrangement with no psychological dimension is echoed in the narrative that became dear to historians and sociologists of the family in the twentieth century: namely that modern marriage and family are in contrast to pre-modern family stamped by individualization and emotionalization. I do not want to feed into this narrative that has met well-founded criticism in the past years. Instead I would like to point to the fact that this very narrative is rooted in the self-description of the society in question, which should make historians wary of replicating it. The crucial point in thematizations of marriage at the beginning of the twentieth century seems to me to be adequately described not by the slippery notion of "individualization" but by the notion of "psychologization" of interpersonal relationships. This can be linked to a genealogy

of subjectivity as it has been described by Nikolas Rose who insists on the key role of "psy disciplines" in thinking about and acting upon selfhood in the twentieth century (Rose 1998).

9 On rivalry as one of the latent features of gender relations in the twentieth century: see Reese 1999.

10 The genealogy of this dynamic is a complex and complicated one and can not be spelled out in detail here. It involves not only the emergence of the idea of companionate marriage in Protestantism and egalitarian claims of various political origins since the eighteenth century, but also the tradition of gender arrangements in artisanal, agrarian and proletarian households.

11 The position of the advocates of a "New Ethic" was presented in 1909 in an anthology entitled *Ehe? Zur Reform der sexuellen Moral* (Marriage? On the Reform of Sexual Morality). The critique of this position was presented in 1911 in an anthology entitled *Frauenbewegung und Sexualethik. Beitraege zur modernen Ehekritik* (Woman's Movement and Sexual Ethics. Contributions to Modern Marriage Criticism). Cf. on this debate and on the "New Ethic" in general: Kuhn and Kohser-Sponsor 2001, Reinert 2000, Lichtblau 1993, Gilcher-Holtey 1992. For an extended discussion of that movement's discourse on love see: Arni 2004b.

12 On what can be called the "psychologization of love" see: Rose 1999, pp. 155-181 for the case of paternal love, where love is conceptualized, in the first half of the twentieth century, as the very element in which psychic and social normality and abnormality were produced.

13 There are, however, notable exceptions to be mentioned. Lichtblau 1996, for instance, takes into account the New Ethic's discussion when analyzing early German "Kultursoziologie."

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